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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

AN INVITATION TO DANCE:
THE GENTLE ART OF TEACHING

BY

LUCILLE MANDIN ©

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
EDMONTON, ALBERTA
FALL, 1989

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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DEGREE: Ph.D.

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 1989

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Lucille Mandin
(Student's signature)

10 Banting Place
(Student's permanent address)
St. Albert, Alberta

Date: September 20, 1989

The Creation of Gaia's Dance

"Gaia is swathed in white veils as she whirls through the darkness. As she becomes visible and her dance grows ever more lively, her body forms itself into mountains and valleys; then sweat pours from her to pool into seas and finally, her flying arms stir up a wind-sky which she wraps around herself as protector and mate."

(Dr. Elisabet Sahtouris, 1989, p. 23)

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF CRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "An Invitation to Dance: the Gentle Art of Teaching" submitted by Lucille Mandin in partial fulfilment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Daiyo Sawada
Supervisor

Therese Craig

W H O Schmidt

Douglas V. Parker

Merron Chorny
External Examiner

Date September 20, 1989

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my father, PAUL HOGUE, with whom I experienced the beauty and the harmony of the dance of life.

To my mother, ROSE-ALMA HOGUE, who continues to teach me gentleness and perseverance to pursue my dreams, my ideals.

To my children, CHRISTIAN AND CANDICE, to whom I wish teachers who invite them to dance often in their journey of life.

To my husband, EMILE, who shares with me, this vision of education for our children and for all the children of the world.

ABSTRACT

After teaching for two decades, I was privileged to have the opportunity to 're-search' myself as a teacher. As I became more conscious of my view of education and of mankind, I was able to explore more fully the coherence between my theory and my practice. I seized this opportunity to make the 'unconscious conscious' as I proceeded to name my reality as a teacher educator.

As I engaged in reflection and action, the metaphor of dance surfaced as a medium which became my message. This document features the dance of my dissertation within which is included the dance of my teaching and learning. The dance, choreographed around a course I teach, encapsulates emancipatory education and literature under the rubric of teaching.

The dance emerged from Harris' model of teaching which draws heavily on the importance of imagination, of creating and re-creating. The dance has five steps: contemplation, engagement, form-giving, emergence and release. These steps of teaching helped me name my actions as a teacher.

Action and reflection are two major movements which unfold simultaneously in my dance. My own praxis is accompanied by the reactions of education undergraduate students to learning experiences in Language Arts Curriculum and Instruction courses. An accumulation of life experience was gathered through journal writing and interviewing.

As I reflected on my dance, recurring patterns emerged, highlighting elements which enhanced the emancipation of the learners involved in the study. Conscientisation, liberation and empowerment and transformation were featured in my dance as students created connections and made sense of their own knowledge while 'experiencing' and creating literature.

The final step of my dance, that of release, brings closure to my dance and simultaneously marks a new beginning for learners as they create and re-create the knowledge assimilated, to create in turn, their own choreography. This moment also invites me to continue teaching with creative imagination, examining critically the choices and the decisions I make as a teacher. The creation of my choreography unveils for me a renewed profound engagement in a noble profession, full of beauty, majesty and joy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I celebrate the community of teachers and learners who have joined me in creating and completing this dance. You are all part of my choreography in your unique and distinct way.

In particular, I thank my faithful dance partner and teacher, Emile, for his relentless patience, love and support which made this dance possible. With our children, Christian and Candice, I share the joy of the completed dance they so graciously watched me choreograph.

I am deeply grateful to my advisor, Dr. Daiyo Sawada, for his gentle and respectful nudges. To him, I attribute the birth of the artist in me. Because of him, I pursue the metaphor of dance in my life. It was truly a privilege to learn with you. Thank you for the gift.

I also extend my gratitude to Dr. Warren Wilde whose perceptive questions brought new insights to my study and to Sister Theresa Craig, who also encouraged me to pursue the metaphor of dance. Her writings and her advice have been a major source of inspiration for me.

I wish to thank in a special way all the members of my supervisory committee: Dr. France Levasseur-Ouimet, Dr. Douglas Parker and Dr. W.H.O. Schmidt. Their enthusiasm for my work and their perceptive comments throughout this journey, gave me the courage to pursue my ideal, particularly during vulnerable moments.

Special thanks go to my external examiner, Dr. Merron Chorney, whose participation added harmony to the community of learners involved in my study.

Appreciation goes to Dr. David Dillon who modelled the steps and the movements and even supported me as I attempted my first steps. With patience and humility, he helped me find my voice. He taught me how to write. For this I am grateful.

Personal thanks and gratitude are also extended to my friends who were present to my evolution as a learner, as a teacher and as a person. In particular, I thank Olenka Bilash who was not only an important model as a teacher educator but mostly was the 'spark' that incited me to choreograph this dance as she also recognized the artist in me. To her, I owe the title of my dissertation. Thanks also go to Jacinthe Lavoie for her untiring support and dialogue and to Camilla Lavoie, who kept reminding me of the importance of the fundamental educational issues in my research. She helped me put into practice the ideas I had been espousing as an educator. I am also deeply grateful to Irene Wilson who introduced me to Maria Harris' work.

Finally, I offer my gratitude and affection to the students who trusted and accepted my invitation to dance. They have enabled me to celebrate the beauty and the majesty of the noble profession we have embraced. I hope in turn, they will recognize the beauty that lies within each one of them.

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INTRODUCTION

INVITATION TO DANCE

One day as I sat at my desk, my son came up to me asking: "Maman, what are you writing? What is your story about?"

M: It is about dancing.

S: Oh really? Dancing with whom?

M: Dancing with you and all your classmates, with my students and also by myself.

S: Oh! I thought it was about school but we don't dance at school.

And I began to wonder... His words weighed heavily upon me, because to me, teaching is analogous in many ways to dance.

Although I subscribe to that notion today, I did not share the same view when I began teaching twenty years ago. At that time, dance was far from my mind as I struggled to survive with basic strategies, techniques and procedures. However, like dance, my teaching evolved from movement sequences along a straight line, restricted mainly to steps and movements of the legs to that of contemporary dance founded on the law of natural motion and natural rhythms. Like Isadora

Duncan, I am in search of freedom in motion and motion in freedom as I reflect on the events in my life which have heightened my level of awareness as a teacher.

My dissertation is the instrument I use to give shape, to create and re-create the sense I make of some life experiences as a student and as a teacher, which nudged me to see the familiar with new eyes. Since it is also the means through which I express the meaning I give to these experiences which I liken to dance, my dissertation becomes part of the dance. Each chapter thus becomes not only a reflection upon the dance (reflection in motion) but a mirror reflection of the moment, of the measured steps in what I have chosen to call my dance (motion in reflection). My dissertation mirrors the evolution of my dance as I sway, tiptoe, stretch, twirl and sometimes leap toward the shape that emerges. At this point, my dance is a personal expression, much like that found in modern or contemporary dance, ballet or even social dances, favoring the growth of the needs and capacities of the individual.

> "Dance is an art, a form of self-expression, a joy."
>
> (Mersereau, Glover and Cherland, 1989, p. 117)

This quotation sheds light on the meaning I bring to dance. For me, the art of dance reflects coherence and harmony between dancers and music. A dynamic movement is created and re-created by the dancers in response to the interaction between the music and the dancers at each particular moment in each particular context.

Through dance, the human being is given the opportunity to discover his body as the expressive instrument which develops the aesthetic and creative side of its nature. However, to achieve a smooth aesthetic performance, the dancers often face moments of anxiety, fear, pain and fatigue but they also experience exhiliration and excitement. This tension creates the delight as the emotional release is sensed through dance. The energy flows from the dancers' bodies as they spontaneously coordinate their movements with the music. Grace, control and feeling intertwine to reflect the mood, the emotions or the images to be shared.

What does dancing have to do with teaching and learning? Like dance, teaching is for me 'an art, a form of self-expression, a joy'. I share Dyson's view that teaching is " a dynamic, interactive dance; teachers and children interact to create activities; to create curricula as they work to reach their respective goals" (p. 153). In teaching, we also go through movements to reach our goals, some of which are forever changing, as we adjust to individual needs and interests - like the dancers adjusting to their interpretations of the music and the abilities of their bodies.

The metaphor of dance also fits my view of teaching literature as it is a creative act in which the reader creates and re-creates the meaning he brings to text. Literary text is the music which provokes the dance in the readers. Like dance, reading has movements and steps. As teachers we must constantly invite students to create their own dance.

The purpose of this dissertation is therefore to reflect on what can be done with literature in an educational setting to enhance the possibilities of emancipating learners. Emancipatory education portrays the learners as no longer mere objects responding to change around them but as subjects who act upon and transform their world. The learners indeed bring forth in dance, the resonances of their world.

It is to the metaphor of dance I turned to reflect upon the events which brought me to see teaching and more precisely the teaching of literature with new eyes. Teaching now offers me a more imaginative and creative role. Having taught for almost two decades, my experiences bring me not to boredom, but to creativity - an imaginative educational world that is a magnificent challenge in my life. I danced with people in situations which allowed me to experience my imagination and brought me to hope and activity. Other times, events and experiences helped me venture onto the 'road less travelled' to see events further, oftentimes deeper, into a world of wonderment. There were also moments of solitude when I danced alone. Possibly it was then that insights came to me the most clearly.

Drawing on my creative imagination, my teaching began to focus on creating new possibilities within every teaching opportunity. To teach creatively was to offer students the opportunity to take the curriculum and reshape it, recreate it according to their realities.

My dissertation invites you to my coming-to-know performance. It will feature the dance of my dissertation within which will be included the dance of my teaching and learning. Such is the nature of my reflection on a pedagogy based on the discovery of beauty in teaching and of the beauty in living. My dissertation gives me the opportunity to stand back and be still to better understand and to rediscover the creative, artistic teachers we are and were meant to be.

Like Harris (1987), I feel we need "an arena, a context and an occasion to contemplate our teaching and to recover, if we have lost them, the dreams and the hopes, the vision and the grandeur that lie at the core of teaching" (p. xi). Like her, I am convinced our society needs a philosophy of education that explores a depth in teaching, " a philosophy that begins not with technique but with the majesty and the mystery that is teaching" (p. 24). Her model for teaching draws heavily on the importance of imagination, of creating and re-creating. For Harris the teaching process has five steps: contemplation, engagement, form-giving, emergence, and release. Contemplation implies a moment of stillness. It is a state of mind that is simultaneously wide-awake and free from all preoccupations or preconceptions. The moment of engagement brings the teacher to reflect on the subject matter, including both the content of teaching and the students. Form-giving is the way the teacher attempts to put the subject matter together. The moment of emergence is the moment of birth. The learning situation is the home of new knowledge. Finally, the moment of release arrives. The teacher can simply let the learner go with the knowledge acquired in that setting. While release is the last moment of teaching it is also a new beginning.

According to Harris, dancing and teaching both refer to an act of creating and re-creating. Thus the metaphor of dance emerges. Her steps of teaching helped me name my actions as a teacher. These actions surprisingly fit the notion of dance.

Like the dancer, who must contemplate the inner life of the music and must engage himself or herself in its harmonic flow, the teacher contemplates the situation, engages his or her self with both the learners as well as the content. Once the 'subjects'[1] are identified, the teacher gives form to the context which will best enhance the emergence of knowledge. Much like the dancers' thought-provoking choreography, the last movement sees the teacher let go and celebrate the learning in individuals as they make sense - each in his or her own way - as they interact with the world outside themselves as well as with the world 'inside' them. The release provides the energy to anticipate and contemplate another dance, another set of movements. And the dance continues...

The movements in Harris' dance flow together, overlap, are repeated and blend into a choreographed motion to create an aesthetic experience which inspired me. As I visualize events which have made a difference in my teaching, her model invites me. I therefore draw from her model to name the moments of my dance. The first moment is one of contemplation during which I attentively observe the experiences which altered my existence as a teacher.

The first chapter, Contemplation and Experience, will give you a glimpse of a few of my learning experiences, a flavor of moments which heightened my level of consciousness. These experiences are possibly the events which catapulted me into an emancipatory paradigm. As a spectator and a performer, I was lured into exhilirating and thrilling moments in spite of the uncertainty and anxiety. Eventually, I was brought to order and harmony. And I was ready for another moment in the dance... My dissertation is the dance I create from the moment of contemplation and experience.

---

[1] The word 'subject' in this context, includes not only the content to be covered but also the human beings engaged in the process of learning. This notion is found in Freire (1970), pp. 12-13.

In my dissertation, I dance with different partners. I attempt to arrange a choreography with emancipatory education and literature under the rubric of teaching. The dancing partners are the human models which I have encountered as a learner and the students I came to know as a teacher. The dance is comprised of two major movements which unfold simultaneously: action and reflection. My own praxis is accompanied by the reactions of my students to experiences in the emancipatory paradigm.

These powerful experiences, presented in Chapters 2 and 3, provide the music which nurture my moment of engagement. This moment precedes my reflection on how I came to know. During the moment explored in Chapter 3, the experts are invited to participate in the dance as illuminators of ways of knowing. With them, I hope to present the methodology I have selected to create the choreography of this dissertation.

In Chapter 4, Form-Giving: Creating My Choreography, I share with you how I create my own dance and bring it to life. To give form to my pedagogy, I perform the same steps as those chosen for the dance of my dissertation. While the moments of contemplation, engagement, form-giving are presented in Chapter 4, the moment of emergence is presented in Chapter 5.

Through the reactions of my students, I will reflect on the knowledge emerging from these experiences. Chapter 5 - Reflecting on the Dance - presents the meaning I draw from the dance. The students' responses to the moments of my choreography serve as a source to help me make sense of the transformations in my dance. From their reflections emerge the insights I have come to uncover. Chapter 6 explores the moment of release. Although it is the final moment of the dance, it is not a culminating moment. It is a renewed invitation to dance...

CHAPTER 1

CONTEMPLATION AND EXPERIENCE

A Moment of Stillness

Prior to creating my dance, like an artist, I engage in a period of silence, of stillness, to contemplate my dance, wide-awake and free. Benjamin Hoff (1982) in his book, The Tao of Pooh, paints a picture of 'stillness' with these words:

> "An Empty sort of mind is valuable for finding pearls and tails and things because it can see what's in front of it. An Overstuffed mind is unable to. While the Clear mind listens to a bird singing, the Stuffed - Full - of - Knowledge - and-Cleverness mind wonders what kind of bird is singing. The more Stuffed Up it is, the less it can hear through its own ears, see through its own eyes. Knowledge and Cleverness tend to concern themselves with the wrong sorts of things, and a mind confused by Knowledge, Cleverness and Abstract Ideas tends to go chasing off after things that don't matter, or that don't exist instead of seeing, appreciating and making use of what is right in front of it" (p. 146).

As I wonder about my dance, I seek the "Emptiness that cleans out the messy mind and charges up the batteries of spiritual energy" (Hoff, p. 146). It is this moment which provides the elan for the choreography I am about to create. It begins as a moment filled with imagery and feelings which are bounced off my consciousness in a series of alternating, united and measured moments of voices and sounds. It is then a moment of great stillness. It is the moment before reflection when all that fills me is the reality of being in a state of dance. It is a state of profound and attentive observation of the experience of teaching and learning, in the silence of my own reality and in the sonority of a reality shared with a great number of student voices and silences.

It is an experience which can best be shared by the Haiku poem written by Maroon (1987):

"We meet awkwardly.
I invite you to walk.
I find you dancing."

This poem captures some of the aesthetics of the teaching activity I am about to describe. It also provides an example of a way of approaching teaching creatively, in an evocative mode rather than in a didactic mode. [1]

As you will see in the following descriptions of experiences which heightened my level of consciousness as a teacher and as a learner, the anticipation and the meetings were awkward. In both instances, I sensed an invitation to walk and eventually found myself dancing.

From the stillness and the silence emerges the desire to contemplate on these experiences before I create my own dance. I extract the wisdom embedded in these lived experiences so that I may choreograph a dance that will bring beauty and joy to me and to the students whom I invite 'to walk'.

---

[1] In his book, The University Teacher as an Artist, Axelrod refers to two teaching styles: the didactic model and the evocative mode. In the didactic mode, inquiry on the part of the student is not required or encouraged while in the evocative mode, the student is required to question if he is to complete successfully, the tasks set by the teacher. The teachers who achieve excellence in the didactic modes are called craftsmen; those teachers who achieve excellence in the evocative mode are called artists.

Moments of Awakening

Almost 8 years ago, I flew to Belgium as a Canadian delegate to participate in a foreign language teaching seminar hosted by the research center, CIAVER (Centre International Audio-Visuel d'Etudes et de Recherches) and sponsored by ACCT (Agence de Co-opération Culturelle et Technique) in Paris. The program of the seminar entitled, Réflexion sur l'enseignement du français au primaire, stated that the participants would be involved in a foreign language learning experience. The 'experience' appealed to me although I was anxious about being immersed in a language unknown to me. After all, I was a teacher of teachers, accustomed to telling what I know to others who do not know. Rarely did I lack this security.

After a brief description of the plans for the five-week seminar, we were immediately plunged into a foreign language situation. The director of the research center immediately began speaking German, a language unknown to all the delegates.

Guten Tag, meine Freunde!

Heute, werden wir ...

The beginning of the lesson disappointed me for a brief moment. An audio- visual approach à la 'Bonjour Line' was used to introduce the first dialogue - the same approach I had been taught to use to teach French as a Second Language. My initial reaction was to resist, but something about the director did not allow me to bask in this state of mind for long. He had piqued my curiosity. Was it his belief in what he does? Was it that he expected resistance and was willing to wait us out? I found myself trusting him and in so doing discovering new ways of learning a foreign language . My approach to the experience was one of openness - I was open to seeing old knowledge in novel ways.

The dialogue was presented in the form of a film - strip without sound - once and then a second time. To my dismay, we were immediately peeled off our comfortable chairs to dramatize non-verbally the dialogue which was significant due to its powerful authentic context. We were subsequently invited to create our own story from this visual presentation. Although movie-going is a cultural event with which we are familiar in the Western world, the African participants struggled with sense-making even though the visual presentation was to my mind, quite explicit. The story was about a couple, meeting at the theatre, before a performance. The man, Heinz, precedes his date, Utta and waits impatiently for her. When she arrives, she unabashedly dares suggest one more delay, that of purchasing nuts at the counter. The story lent itself well to active participation. Already, my perceptions had changed: I felt excited about volunteering to play the role of Utta with the teacher - an unusual event in my life as I rarely took risks, particularly when involved with a new group of persons. What made me risk? Was it the non-threatening climate which had been created since our arrival in this European city? Was it our teacher's belief in our potential as language learners?

We then listened to the sound track, accompanied by visuals. Although I did not understand every word, I marvelled at my understanding of the language. What helped me decipher questions and affirmations? The intonation and the rhythm were more powerful than I had ever imagined. But, I failed to hear the words, let alone remember every word of the dialogue. My memory was doing double time because I sensed we would be invited to dramatize, this time, verbally, the dialogue. Therefore, I quickly began to write the dialogue phonetically so as to appear more intelligent when my turn came to recite the sentences. My ego suffered a shock when the teacher gently uttered in German:

Keine schreiben heute. (It is forbidden to write today.)

The very first day I was 'invited' to attempt to say the words I felt comfortable to utter, to gesticulate or to imitate the rhythm and intonation as best I could. The teacher would fill in the spaces, as we risked and attempted to re-invest actively what we had already learned after forty minutes of German lessons. He was indeed celebrating our successes. He knew time would assist us in sorting sounds and words. With a lot of hesitation I attempted to dramatize the dialogue with the teacher. Fortunately, the dialogue matched my life experience and I could easily identify with Utta who was late for a date at the cinema. After six years, I still remember the dialogue. It went like this:

Heinz: Acht Uhr! Und Utta ist nicht da!
Ah! Hier kommt sie.
Yutta: Guten Tag Heinz!
Heinz: Guten Tag Utta!
Schnell!Schnell! Gleich beginnt der Filme.

The dance had started. Already I felt harmony with the group, which was composed of 23 delegates from French-speaking countries of the world - 19 African participants, one from New Guinea and two other Canadian delegates. We were to spend two hours every day listening to and speaking German. Some resistance was felt as we were guided without theory in an experience which needed time and openness on the part of the participants. Our equilibrium was disturbed as this did not match our prior professional development experiences. As a rule, we sit and are told what and how to innovate. This time, we were given the opportunity to act and to reflect upon the experience of learning a foreign language as we were learning one. We were involved in what Freire (1970) calls "praxis" - simultaneous action and reflection.

Another important component to the seminar was what they entitled "Rythmes musicaux et expressions corporelles". Truly, this sounded interesting, but how did it fit with learning a foreign language? I wondered. Indeed there again, I expected to sit and hear about how this was important in learning languages but no... we were invited to taste, to experience. It was the second day. We were led by a petite, calm but energetic woman into a room with no chairs, just a wide open space. In the corner was a reel-to-reel tape recorder. She invited us to the center of the room, we formed a circle and the music began. We looked at each other with awe and watched her as she began to beat the rhythm with her feet and with her hands. The music, Bach's "Adagio du concerto" played at high volume, lured us to tap as incognito as possible (so as to not be noticed). Bodies began to sway discretely, but visibly. In response to her invitation, we imitated her struggling to synchronize our rhythms with hers and to the strong, regular rhythm of this instrumental piece of music. From this we progressed to walking around in a circle, always respecting the regular 4/4 rhythm. As arms uncrossed, I noticed shy, timid smiles on the faces of the participants. It was an awkward moment, but a joyful one. The veil of tension seemed to rise as time allowed us to accept the energy of the music and of the people, slowly dropping our defenses and living fully this unusual event in our lives as educators.

This was the beginning of a progressive experience with music. From this basic initiation to rhythm, we would soon interpret music creatively and imaginatively combining movement and language. These highly structured experiences gradually became moments of liberating personal expression in the spontaneous choreographies we imagined . For example, to the piece of music, "Sarabande", we simulated a procession of condemned prisoners who were to be executed. One group of participants played the role of the prisoners and another played the role of the executioners. The powerful context provided by the well-chosen musical piece inspired the participants to react very realistically to the roles they were assigned. Not one participant refused the challenge: the prisoners advanced in a procession, arms crossed on their chest as the executioners waited with their imaginary weapons. From this dance, an enormous amount of energy was felt as the 'killers' administered the fatal blow to the 'prisoners'. One could feel the tension in the deliberate controlled movements of their bodies. These movements showed the tensions created by conflict within the individuals. Slowly, motion gave way to emotion. I, personally was overwhelmed by the power of that moment - I cried.

Although we were eventually introduced to the written German symbols, the teacher emphasized the importance of the time spent listening to the language and training the ear. As language learners and teachers, we expected to spend time listening to the language prior to producing it but no one expected to be engaged in relaxing strategies, to be initiated to the pulse of music, to be involved in responding to music, bodily as well as imaginatively. Again we waited for the explanation of why...but the teacher gave very little information. We were invited to savour the experience of self-discovery while learning another language. The cognitive learners began to fidget in their chairs and their level of resistance increased ... but more importantly, something was happening to the learning climate. Most of the students lost their inhibitions to risk: they volunteered to attempt to verbalize their limited newly-acquired knowledge of German rather than look down abashedly, hoping to avert the teacher's eyes so as to avoid being asked to participate actively. We were gently, but firmly, nudged into becoming active participants in the learning process: the dance was beginning.

As we were all lodged in a motel some distance from other distractions, we always ate together. Our knowledge of German began to take shape as we played with it. We built on the connections we made individually to share not only our common interest, that of language education, but also as human beings to share our vast cultural differences.

Socially, the group became more cohesive. We sensed an accumulation of energy as the group unconsciously transformed the input, ordered and re-ordered it in a creative manner. A sense of trust had developed and students were more willing to risk, although unsure of their dance steps. However, experience is not in and of itself a change agent. We as learners had to be provoked, guided towards new awareness. It was only in the last few days that 'our provocative nudgers' chose to help us reflect on the experience and structure the knowledge gained during the seminar . Surprisingly, the teaching team's theoretic input was limited. The director presented the framework of their methodology in a few brief lectures. We were also asked to draft a paper to synthesize our newly acquired knowledge and to state our immediate plan of action upon returning to our respective countries. At this moment, new knowledge emerged. I realize today the trust, the respect and the patience the teachers had for us, as learners and as educators although at that time I did not understand what it was they did that "changed me forever" (Hunsberger,1983). Over time, I have gained insight into the dimensions which have made this learning process so memorable. I integrated some of their methodology immediately into my teaching. For example, I now use music as a medium for developing listening as well as provoking the imaginative mind of language learners. However, it was only much later that I understood the depth of their pedagogy.

The disequilibrium experienced at this research centre resulted in a heightened consciousness towards order and harmony. I had a new sense of dance - The moment of stillness, although brief, inspired my engagement to this learning experience. Progressively, the activities began to flow together, to overlap and to blend into an aesthetic event that brought joy and pleasure. Although I could not articulate clearly at that time the form emerging from this experience, something new was born: something irrevocable. When I left Belgium, that particular moment of the dance was finished, but dancing continued...

My second invitation to dance took place in a university setting, where I was invited to dance as a student. Although it only lasted three weeks, I consider it paramount in my development as a teacher. It was the last course I needed to fulfill the course requirements of my doctoral program. The course, taught by a visiting professor, had been recommended by a professor who said: "This course is worth pursuing, not so much for the content of the course as for the flavor of the professor." Indeed, he was right. From the onstart, I was lured into the dance - by his British accent, by his intensity, by his naturalness and certainly by his passion for literature and for learning. I documented carefully what he said, what we did in his course and kept a personal diary of my reactions. I use this experience to reflect upon the essence of teaching. What made it so powerful? As I describe brief moments of this course, they will appear as a glimpse of the sense I make of these experiences for now, for all is movement. The reality I attempt to shape for myself is dynamic, not static. As Prigogine (1984) states, "reality is multiple, temporal and complex" (p. 15).

This reflection presents the two most obvious elements of teaching: the teacher and the students. However, in teaching, there is always a third element, the subject matter. The course entitled Literature and Learning was designed to reflect on what to do with literature in our elementary classes. The teacher and the students came together in the presence of literature.

The first day of the course was an eventful one. Although we sat in a room familiar to me, although I knew some of the students, the very first encounter with the professor alerted me to something different. "I'm not a great believer in course outlines because they do not lend themselves to change" was one of his opening statements. He also announced that everyone would get a good mark. His calm, serene demeanor immediately set the tone for the three-week experience we were about to engage in. He immediately introduced us to a literary experience -the first of many we would be exposed to in a short period of time.

> "What I am about to ask you is difficult in 1985, sitting in a warm, dry comfortable room. Close your eyes! Imagine this is W.W.I. and you are in a cold, moist trench surrounded by muddied ground, without a tree in sight. Your clothing feels permanently wet and your boots are cracking; you have not had time to treat them with Dubbin. Your eyes examine the rectangular edge at the top of the trench. You look at the bottom but you cannot see the boards you are standing on because they are covered with three inches of mud. Just then, you are shocked by a brusque command to leave the trench and to head for a dry, comfortable spot."

Then he read this poem aloud:

DULCE ET DECORUM EST

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame, all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf event to the hoots
Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys! - An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And floundering like a man in fire or lime.
Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams before my helpless sight
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.
If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil sick of sin;
If you could hear at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth - corrupted lungs,
Bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, -
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie; Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.

Wilfred Owen

After a strong moment of silence, he said: "Record what was going on in your head. Let your pen follow your mind's eye" . And thus began another event which I use to contemplate on teaching and learning. The dimension of literature contributes the music for this dance.

Although I cannot recite Dulce et Decorum Est today, my desire to read it again, to savour it and to share it with others, motivates me to reflect on this educational experience. What made the experience so powerful, so aesthetic? Today as I attempt to describe this experience, I feel words fall short of transmitting the vitality, the resonance this moment had for me. However, in retrospect, the tingle remains, the mystery hovers... I had, at that moment, begun to understand the importance of experiential learning as well as the power of people's imagination. The imagery I brought to the poem created greater ownership of the material. A clearer picture merged for me of how the creative process works with students.

In another instance during the course, a sense of pride rushed through me as I wrote a Haiku poem, inspired from the image I had created on a blank sheet of paper. The professor guided us: "Take out a blank sheet of paper. As you are staring at this sheet, an insect appears. It is getting bigger and bigger. Look at its shape. Write the words that come to mind. After some time, look at its color and repeat the same procedure. From these words, select the ones you like and find powerful and write a Haiku poem. It again convinced me that there is no device, no matter how sophisticated, that can equal the power, the flexibility and the ease of use of the human imagination. It was then that I began to understand more deeply that we all are in our own way the world's finest multisensory teaching machine. The task at hand is simply to realize this and to be "wide-awake" [1] to these instances when they happen in our lives. Encouraging people to become aware of their own creativity, their intuition, is to empower them not only to weave their experiences in their own realities but also to expand the opportunities to realize their full potential.

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[1]. Greene (1978) uses the word "wide-awake" as a synonym for conscientisation.

Literary experiences had now been expanded to writing. I had just pierced the mystery of the elitist club - the few who can partake in the joy of creating literature, of telling one's story. Was that perhaps the delight I experienced? I had for a moment again been catapulted, pushed far-from-equilibrium.[1] This professor was not going to help us analyze and critique literature... There was another way. Literature was beginning to impact my life in a very personal way.

I continued to experience literature every day in a different way but there was always that constant delight. Is that the ineffable I want to reflect upon?

Allow me to share with you another experience which exemplifies another type of literary experience, this time shared with a group of people seeking to shape their meaning of a poem. This experience remains for me an example of the unique close relationship between words and experience. We were given the following poem to read and share.

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[1]. The word 'far-from-equilibrium' is borrowed from Prigogine's theory of dissipative structure which offers a scientific model of transformation and the critical role of stress in this movement. A dissipative structure is described as flowing wholeness - highly structured but always in process. In order to maintain this movement and the connections, energy is needed. The continous movement through the system results in fluctuations. If the fluctuations are minor, they do not alter the integrity of the structure. But if the fluctuations reach a critical size, they perturb the system and the number of novel interactions are increased. The structure is pushed 'far-from-equilibrium'. Due to this perturbation, the old ideas come into contact with each other in new ways and make new connections. The parts reorganize into a new whole.

Metaphors

I'm a riddle in nine syllables,
An elephant, a ponderous house,
A melon strolling on two tendrils.
O red fruit, ivory, fine timbers!
This loaf's big with its yeasty rising.
Money's new-minted in this fat purse
I'm a means, a stage, a cow in calf.'
I've eaten a bag of green apples,
Boarded a train there's no getting off.

Sylvia Plath

Much like a piece of sculpture, we began to examine it in different light, at different angles, and even look through it. As we mused over the words, we all attempted to create and to re-create our meaning. Were we seeking to find order? The movement was apparent as we shared spontaneous responses to Sylvia Plath's well chosen words.

After the first reading rumblings were heard, some of them uttered silently: "I don't get it!" - a common cliche used by people who are left confused and disoriented. As we dared advance new hypotheses, the flow of energy increased. The group of five readers were quickly involved in negotiating meaning. At first, it was believed the poem was about prostitution - the words 'money's new-minted', 'I'm a means', 'a stage' appeared to fit. However, as we struggled to find connections, concensus was reached that the metaphor was about feelings of pregnancy. The words 'nine syllables', 'a cow in calf' provided strong indices. Still further deliberations on the form confirmed another hypothesis - nine lines, nine syllables per line and the nine letters in the title Metaphors.

Once the theme was identified, the feedback loops began to fluctuate in unpredictable patterns. The dance- the magical relationship between words and their referents - began to emerge as it was invented and re-invented, constructed and re-constructed. The process of visualisation provided strong images, clarifying the emerging meaning - a melon strolling on tendrils, yeast rising suggest multiplying and dividing cells (the curve of the pregnant belly), the bag of green apples suggests lumpiness, indigestion, queasiness, stomach ache (morning sickness) and so on.

Tension was present - both in the turmoil of the text and the sense-making of five readers. The author first sees herself as a cartoon figure (line 3) then moves to what is almost a joyful, celebratory view of pregnancy (line 4). She then shows doubt, with one positive image in each line, another less so. Eventually, she leaves us with a sense of desperation: "Boarded the train there is no getting off".

The five members of the group negotiated meaning intensely as the professor as usual, only alloted a short time for discussion (5 - 10 minutes.) This time limit created a sense of urgency. The 'sprint' created anxiety while at the same time effectively smothering the "participant"[1] role of the negotiators (Britton, 1970). As spectators, they were invited to generate and re-create the ideas and concepts themselves.

After initial doubt, the students voiced their sense of pleasure at having solved the puzzle. "Wow! I admire her technical skill, the control which allows her to move through such a range of emotions in so short a space." "I don't belive it! She made such simple words work so hard." A male member of the group said: "I don't know the tumultuous mental state of being pregnant but now I feel I understand this more. The poem enlarges my experience."

After such experiences, although there are strong struggles, the establishment of order very often is sensed as a deep sense of satisfaction - a coming to order feeling, "a tired satisfaction" (Barone, 1983, p. 23).

As I describe this literary experience, the following metaphor is brought to mind. Robert Ardrey in African Genesis describes what appeared to be a coral - colored flower made up of many blossoms, like a hyacinth sitting on a twig. Upon close inspection, he discovered that the 'blossom' turned out to be the wings of an insect. These were flattid bugs. The protective nature of the form taken by these insects impressed him but camouflage was not new to his experience. The prickling sensation in the scalp was triggered by what he saw when his friend shook the twig. The startled colony rose from the twig and filled the air with fluttering flattid bugs... Then they returned to the twig. They flew in no particular order and for a while, the twig was alive with the little creatures climbing over each other and flying in what appeared to be a random pattern. But the movement was not random. Shortly the twig was still and the flower was once again deceptively there.

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[1] Britton (1970) introduces the notion of 'participant' and 'spectator' in his theory of language learning, in which he elaborates on a continuum pertaining to the understanding of language growth from the expressive to more specialized forms of utterance that is, transactional discourse and poetic discourse. In the transactional discourse used mostly to inform and to persuade, we play the role of the 'participant'. As participants, we evaluate in preparation for action. The spectator, freed from the necessity to act, to meet the social demands made upon a participant, uses his freedom to evaluate more broadly. For example, if I describe what has happened to me in order to get my hearer to do something for me, I remain a participant. If on the other hand I merely want to interest him so that he savours the joys, sorrows and surprises of my past experience and appreciates with me the intricate pattern of events, then I am a spectator. To clarify the difference in our own experience, we can assume that when we are applying our value on statements, we are participants but as spectators, we generate and recreate the idea, the concept itself.

The metaphor fits the pattern of order we as human beings seek, although very often unconsciously. The flattid bug community is like our minds as individuals. We live in harmony in a community. We are often disturbed by events, pushing us away from old patterns and introducing new ways and eventually making new connections. To return to the literary experiences mentioned in my story, I see the resemblance of movement in attempting to bring meaning to text, to literature. For example, the interpretation of the poem 'Metaphors' shows how black and white squiggles were transformed into a negotiated meaning where every participant found his/her place in the 'flower'- we sat comfortably with our meaning until... someone or something shook our twig. The shaking could take the form of a different interpretation for 'Metaphors' due to the introduction of a new idea or the introduction of another text in our lives, pushing us to search the meaning we make of it.

This was just another moment upon which I reflected as a literature teacher. Was the newness what struck me? Or, was I becoming more aware of the complex structure of literature as a medium of education? Although I could not articulate at that moment the 'delight' I sensed, something had happened that made me different.

The contrast between these two learning experiences, on the one hand, and my other course work, on the other, was dynamic. In all my graduate work the pattern had been similar and predictable. Courses were centered around printed and written material. They consisted of lectures by the professors and discussions with the students. They usually required term papers which were discursive, rational and cognitive in nature. Feeling was not a constituent of these courses: the messages were the messages; the medium never became messages. Dancing never began. There was no music.

These experiences turned this entire academic pattern inside out and upside down. The 'literature' course had a verbal and written component like the other courses, but this was balanced by extensive, liberating sessions where we created and re-created meaning in media other than words. We were given space and time to express our perceptions, our understanding, and our feelings. There were also moments of structuring knowledge - lectures on the purpose of music in language learning, sessions on the process of aesthetic reading - but these always came after the experience and sometimes long after it.

The most important feature was the constant invitation to dance. This was done by disturbing me - pushing me 'far-from-equilibrium'. I became curious about what the teachers guiding these three experiences did. It was then that I decided to reflect on their teaching in order to be more conscious of the elements I consider to be important in my teaching.

CHAPTER 2

ENGAGEMENT: A REFLECTION ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

> "One of the great sorrows in human life is the discovery,
> too late, of our own beauty and of the beauty of much
> that we do.
> (Harris, 1987, p. xi)

This quotation brings me to reflect on the opportunity I had to realize the privilege we as teachers have. I celebrate the events which have brought me to this realization and I rejoice in how early I have come to know. I now accept the challenge to try to understand the moments that brought me to question the learning environment in which I lived most of my life, one in which I felt safe as limits were imposed by teachers. Like Fivé (1986), a teacher - researcher, "I loved being taught, I was a passive learner with no ideas of my own, a receptacle for ideas of others" (p. 710).

During the moment of engagement in my dance, I bring the contemplative imagination to bear on something tangible and make the creative imagination actual. Just as dancers move from contemplation of music and movements to the moment of coordinating their bodies to engage in dance, I move beyond the contemplation on my dissertation to its initial creation. I endeavor to gather and reflect upon the elements contemplated upon to bring forth the strength and the body of my dissertation. It is during the moment of engagement that I "wrestle with and roll around in subject matter" (Harris, 1987, p. 30). After identifying the filter through which I see education, I announce the questions which brought me to this dance and the steps taken to give form to my pedagogy.

Trying to Find the Steps

... The Learner's Dance ...

Unconsciously, through these experiences , my pedagogy was altered: was I perceiving the function of education through different lenses? I started to focus on a sense of purpose in life, the uniqueness of each individual and fundamental rights, responsibilities and freedoms. My gradual change of focus directed me towards an emancipatory pedagogy - a pedagogy able to empower and to transform learners as a result of a deepened awareness of their potential as human beings. All of this was without a doubt possible, even rooted in the fact that I had experienced emancipatory education.

Although I find more and more teachers are becoming aware of an empowering pedagogy in which learners are conscientized about their responsibility in learning , there has been an erosion of belief in the power of human intervention. Teaching is too often addressed as a skill rather than as a work of art (Greene,1978; Axelrod, 1973; Whitehead, 1929 and Dewey,1958). The teacher 'craftsmen' is often rewarded as she or he achieves objectives that are generally clear and easy to formulate. The cognitive knowledge acquired primarily by memorization, repetition and practice, appears to be a precious commodity in the system.

For example, prior to meeting our learners and reflecting on their needs and interests, decisions have already been made as to what they should learn. Although teachers should be aware of the subject matter, the curriculum to be taught before teaching, could not some choices be left open to accommodate the needs evolving as the course progresses? In that way, learners could become subjects of learning rather than just mere learners of subjects. Emancipatory educators such as Dewey, Freire, Greene, and Fergusson state that students should be enabled to encounter curriculum as possibility. Curriculum should provide opportunities for individuals to reflect consciously and critically on themes of their existence until they are able to name their experiences. Greene (1978) claims students "ought to be left free to look out upon their own landscapes, or what may be thought of as their own perceptual ground." (p. 19)

Furthermore, only if choices are possible will learners feel involved as active participants. Passivity and apathy apparent when all choices are made for learners, decrease when students are invited to make choices.

Part of emancipatory education is to bring learners to transcend passivity and apathy. The etymology of 'emancipate' is helpful to better understand the meaning of emancipatory education. In Latin, emancipation is derived from emancipare - to set free, manus - hand and capere - to take. We, as educators, must endeavor to invite learners to take their education in their hands and to become 'wide-awake' to what they know. In doing so, they will be invited to explore their full potential as human beings.

However, learners cannot be nudged to go beyond the apathy and passivity familiar to them in a pedagogy where they are perceived as mere receptacles for information chosen and distributed by the knowers (teachers). They must be exposed to experiences which they will reconstruct for themselves in a deliberate, systemic and sustained effort, and be brought to reflect on these.

Even then, transcendence is not automatic. Transcendence has to be chosen: it can neither be given nor imposed. Greene (1978) suggests "we are more likely to ask questions and seek our own transcendence when we are grounded in our lived lives" (p. 43). We must, therefore, seek to bring students to become grounded in one's selfhood.

... And the Educator's Dance.

> " Consciousness is always of something; it is characterized by intentionality".
> (Greene, 1978, p. 14).

Although we have been pursuing the question of education for a long time, we have not yet reached concensus as to what it is we do when we educate. Why is that? The heart of the matter lies not in what it is but in what we do with it and what we do in its name.

The issue at hand is in the choices we make in identifying what we intend to do, what it is we hope to accomplish since this clearly colors the orientation of this human endeavor. Education always requires intentionality. Therefore, I identify the images of education

I bring to my research as I believe they help me bring a sharper focus to the meaning of my dance.

"Our Landscape"

I am inspired by Freire's (1970) words affirming that the way we teach depends on our view of education and of mankind: "Every educational practice implies a concept of man and the world." (p. 205). Greene (1978) calls this view, our "landscape" (p. 2). She also claims our 'landscapes' affect the way we look at things and how we talk about things and structure our realities.

As we become more conscious of our 'landscape', we can more fully explore the coherence between what we do and what we think we are doing. Do we want to free or to dominate individuals? Should we decide for them what is important or can they be involved in thinking and making choices? Do we want to convey knowledge or do we want to excite a determination in the learner to acquire it for himself and to teach himself how to go about acquiring it? Do we want learners to simply repeat what other generations have done or do we want to enhance opportunities for them to do new things, to go beyond created structures in order to create others?

I choose to opt for the latter part of the questions asked in the previous paragraph. Yes, I want to free students, to involve them in thinking and making decisions, to excite a determination in the learner to acquire knowledge for him or her self and to teach him or her self how to go about acquiring it, to go beyond created structures in order to create new ones. This choice concurs with Schmidt's (1973) view that the "aim of teaching is not to cover all the subject matter nor to provide the final answers, but to lead the learner to ask significant questions and to make him [her] independent of the teacher and able to in his own turn teach his students and educate the young" (p. xvii).

Bringing Forth Through Reflection

As teachers, our mandate is to promote knowing. We must therefore ask the question, what is it to know? This question will have far-reaching implications because it will affect the choice of educational opportunities we offer in order to come to know. Therefore, we must, as educators, reflect on our purpose of education, our conception of what it is we, as teachers, do. As Heathcote (1976) so succinctly presents it:

> "If you cannot increase reflective power in people, you might as well not teach because reflection is the only thing that in the long run changes anybody" (p. 77).

The etymology of the word 'education' provides direction. In Latin, education is derived from e - out of, and ducare - to lead out of, to bring out that which is within. Educating may mean just helping people get in touch with what they already know. For example, Heathcote, one of England's best known educators, uses drama to educate - that is, to literally bring out "what children already know but are not aware that they know" (Wagner, 1976, p. 13).

This view of education is supported by Khalil Gibran (1956) who in his profound wisdom, reminds us of our role as teachers:

> "Aucun homme ne peut rien vous révéler sinon ce qui repose déjà à demi endormi dans l'aube de votre connaissance. La

vision de l'homme ne prête pas ses ailes à un autre homme" (p. 17).

The image offered by an African art called Shona sculpture, also sheds light on my role as an educator. The art consists of carving stone, not to create a piece of art but to unveil the essence, the beauty inside the stone. It is with much sensitivity that they contemplate in silence the unique interior beauty encapsulated in the stone. As teachers, we are also called to contemplate and to uncover our uniqueness and beauty, and that of each person we encounter.

One student recently shared this poem with me in one of her journal entries. It shed light on my reflection.

Aims of Knowledge - Reflections of Light

I can dance far into tomorrow
With a song written in my heart
I can paint a beautiful picture
Since nature's reflection is art.
I can write an eloquent poem
If I have the words that I need.
I can climb up a rugged mountain
When I have the faith to succeed.

But how can I sing you a song
That will live inside your soul.
How can I fill you with colors
You'll need to perceive the whole.
How can I surround you with words
To write your own refrain.
How can I give you the tools
To traverse unknown terrain?

For I want you to dance upon rainbows -
And let them color your sight.
I want you to paint with sunshine -
As knowledge increased with light.

I want you to sing out your poems -
From heights I may never reach,
But your echo returns from the future...
"Then why isn't that what you teach?"

Debra Schroeder

The powerful concluding sentence leads me to question why in some instances, we educators, spend "desperate hours in front of silent students who stare back - unmoved and speak and write in the phony language they invent for teachers and other authorities." (Freire, 1987, p. 9).

Medium Becoming Message

As I reflect on my past educational experiences, particularly those related to literature, thoughts and ideas surface about the schools of learning Whitehead (1929) denounces: "schools overladened with inert ideas - that is to say, ideas that are merely received into the mind without being utilised, or tested, or thrown into fresh combinations" (p. 13). I refer to the poems I memorized and recited without a mistake (also without feeling) and the numerous literary critiques I regurgitated, based on what the teachers had highlighted as important.

In my quest to become a better teacher, I turn to strong learning events in my life. What did I learn? What did I remember? Why did I remember these moments in particular? From this probing, I realize that the moments which come to mind are strong, aesthetic moments indelibly branded in my mind. Active participation, sharing, risk-taking, choices and joy are words conjured up by recent events which particularly disturbed my familiar and comfortable pattern of learning. I refer to the three experiences presented in Chapter 1, which left me 'forever changed'. Once you have seen, you can no longer not see.

Finding the Steps and Rhythm: My Goals as an Educator

As I pursue my role as an educator, I feel a sense of urgency to make explicit my beliefs about my conception of what it is teachers do and to explore the coherence between pedagogy and my views of education. The urgency is born from the knowledge that many of our teaching practices are affected by what we, as learners, have experienced when we were in schools ourselves. Therefore, if we do not make space and time to allow them to experience learning differently during their teacher education program, when will changes occur? If we believe learning can be emotional, spiritual, intuitive as well as cognitive, we must invite learners to live experiences which will enhance the possibilities of knowing emotionally, spiritually and intuitively.

As I bring learners to become more conscious of their own uniqueness and to celebrate it, I am also called upon to enable them to learn how to learn. The process of making connections with the new knowledge and the knowledge they already know is revealed to them slowly through experiences inviting them to take risks in making sense of their learning in a personal way. To do this, I need to espouse the belief that transformations are conceivable, if learning is stimulated by a freedom to create and re-create meaning for themselves and to create and re-create their medium until it becomes message.

Ultimately, I want to enhance the fulfillment of each individual to his or her maximum potential. The education I undertake should empower them as individuals to reach for transcendence, to go beyond, toward the realization of all their possibilities. These premises are the cornerstones of my reflection on emancipatory education. It is through this filter that I examine my learning and my teaching. As time goes on, I am becoming more and more conscious of the underlying notions which affect my teaching practices and the events which prompt me to change.

CHAPTER 3

ENGAGING IN RESEARCH: SEEKING A METHODOLOGY: A DANCE WITHIN A DANCE

My view of emancipatory teaching had begun to take shape as I reflected on the teachers I had as models. Education had become an endeavor to make me more conscious of my ability to create and re-create meaning for myself as a learner. In doing so, I hopefully focus on my reality reflectively, that is, critically examining the habits and traditions I, as an educator, have adopted through time.

As I reflect on teaching as a work of art, a work in which teachers create and re-create learning situations, I strive to heighten my level of awareness and to help learners transcend passivity and apathy, nudging them towards order and harmony.

At this moment in my dance, I invite the experts to become my dance partners, as they help me name the ways I have come to know. I, therefore, seek a way which brings me to become more aware of how my value commitments affect my pedagogical choices. I find Lather (1985) who argues for "research designs that push us toward becoming vigorously self-aware" (p. 31) . According to her, the research process should "reorient, focus and energize participants toward conscientization, knowing reality in order to better transform it." (p. 33). I therefore seek to find a research methodology that will respect the nature and the purpose of my quest as well as the context in which it takes place.

LEARNING THROUGH TEACHING

The Teacher as a Researcher

> " Research activity is to emancipate teachers from dependence on habit and tradition by providing them with the skills and resources that will enable them to reflect upon and examine critically the inadequacies of different conceptions of education practice". (Carr and Kemmis, 1983, p. 120)

It is in this light of reflection on my experiences as a learner and as a teacher that I choose to explore aspects of my own teaching. The teacher - as - a - researcher model, also referred to as action research (Corey, 1953; Stenhouse,1975; Elliott, 1981), combines action and reflection, to improve human and social conditions. In this orientation the researcher himself becomes part of the object of inquiry. In becoming involved with his subjects, the researcher enters their world and engages them in mutually reflective activity. He questions his subjects and himself. Reflections by himself and by participants allow new questions to emerge which, in turn, leads to more reflection. Self-reflection and reflection with the participants give way to new questions which, in turn, lead to new actions. Critical reflection is oriented towards making the unconscious conscious.

According to Burton (1986), "the value of action research in education lies not in the 'findings' but ultimately in the meaning the researcher brings to it" (p. 719). Elliott (1981) states:

> "action research aims to feed practical judgement in concrete situations and the validity of the "theories" it generates depends not so much on "scientific" tests of truth as on their usefulness in helping people to act more intelligently and skillfully. In action research "theories" are not validated

> independently and then applied to practice. They are validated through practice" (p. 96)

I wish to elaborate now on action, the content of reflection and on reflection, the soul of action. I borrow these terms from Burton (1986) who presents a clear overview of the foundations of action research as well as the psychological process (vs. methodological procedures) at the core of this methodology. Burton espouses three basic beliefs to bring meaning to his research. He believes that:

a) problems are best solved by those who own them. Although he lends credence to the advantages of the 'outsider' he feels research in the social sciences has underestimated the potential of the 'insider' contributions.

b) knowledge is acquired through a reciprocity between thought and action. To understand a phenomenon, one must interact with it in an intellectually honest manner.

c) research should be an effort to uncover potential meanings - tentative solutions - rather than proclaiming certainties which will once and for all predict and explain teaching and learning.

It is with these beliefs that I engage in research. ' Action' in action research is not merely ritualistic or prescribed behavior; it is marked by intentionality. Everything one does is purposeful. However, there is an element of uncertainty which must exist if we are to uncover the multiple layers of meaning. When an action is done, one does not know how it will be received or reacted upon.

Implicit in action is observation. Burton refers to impressionistic observation - observation that occurs on a tacit level while one is teaching. The observation can be described as 'forming impressions' as we act in the classroom. The meanings of these impressions, however, are not uncovered until the moment of reflection in a rigorous, disciplined manner.

As teachers act in classrooms, they recollect impressions of experiences. In order to make meaning from these experiences, teachers must engage in disciplined reflection with an open mind. Disciplined reflection includes "an active desire to give heed to facts from whatever source they come; to give full attention to alternative possibilities; to recognize the possibility of error even in the beliefs that are dearest to us" (Dewey, 1964, p. 224). Disciplined reflection leads to themes. These themes are constructed through the researcher; the researcher is the research instrument and is revealed in his or her work.

The reciprocity of action and reflection is the essence of doing research. It is in this way that I 're-search' both my experience and that of the learners. In that reflection strengthens and gives our intentions sustenance, I realize that reflection is the soul of action. It elevates our impressions, which result in the illumination of layers of meaning. Action, on the other hand, gives reflection substance and grounding.

Already I had begun to make a shift in my way of understanding of praxis. The dichotomy between theory and practice that I once saw had become twin moments of the same activity. Instead of theory leading to practice, I saw theory as the reflective moment in praxis. From that moment arises action which in turn yields further praxis. The praxis way of knowing for me involves a critical reflection on lived experience within a community context.

It brings me to observe what is going on in my classes in new and different ways. Implicit in my purpose of research is my desire to name what it is I do in order to become more conscious of the underlying premises which color my actions. As I learn more about myself and my teaching, I learn more about the students I teach. This reflection makes me 'wide-awake' to examine critically the rituals I have accumulated over the years, which have become habits I have too often maintained, as Donaldson (1978) states, 'mindlessly'.

The term 'reflective practioner' illustrates well the teacher as a researcher approach. I am part of what I am studying. While I am a 'doer', I am also reflecting on what I am doing. As I undertake this reflection I seek a better understanding of my own experience as a learner and a teacher and an understanding of the world of human beings as they create and encounter literature. In this study, I try to understand situations (events and settings) in the context in which they are lived. Each participant interprets these events according to the constructs he/she uses to make sense of his or her experience. My interest lies in uncovering the structures and patterns emerging from interpretations of the events or situations as experienced by my students and myself. Metaphorically, researching is the dancing of reflection and action.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

As a teacher- researcher, I am interpreting my situation as I engage in action. The context being created and re-created by myself and by my students is at the heart of this study. To better 'interpret' I turn to the science of interpretation called hermeneutics. Hermeneutics directs its followers to examine words and their meanings. Etymologically, hermeneutics comes from the Greek *hermeneuin*, which means "to make clear" and "to interpret". Thus it connotes both the search for meaning in a "text" or tradition and the activity of explaining to others what one has found. Hermeneutics stresses the act of mediation between an interpreter and the interpreted. Interpretation is an act which, if successful, produces understanding. "The task of interpretation is to understand that which is interpreted. To produce an interpretation is to come up with an understanding of the'interpreted" (Silverman, 1985, p. 21).

Historically, the field of hermeneutics has developed around the interpretation of literary texts. Researchers of this persuasion attempt to grasp an author's intent to apply meaning within the interpreter's own context. In fact, hermeneutics is at the heart of Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading. This literary theory is the core of my Literature Ed C.I. course. The interpretive act takes priority as one reads a literary text. The meaning the interpreter brings to the poem or to text takes precedence over the author's intention. The possibility of multiple meanings is available as long as they can be shown to constitute an effective understanding of the poem or the text. In this study, students are invited to interpret both literary text and the human event of learning and teaching in a shared praxis.

The definition of hermeneutics given by Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975) focusses on remaining faithful to the situation as interpreted by the researcher. According to him, hermeneutics is "no mere repetition of the text that has been handed down, but is a new creation of understanding" (p. 430). The relationship between the situation being interpreted and the interpreter can be described in terms of the "hermeneutic circle". In this situation, understanding is cumulative and temporal, as the relation interpreter- situation changes over time. The interpretation is carried out between the part and the whole. Meaning emerges as the interpreter acquires new experiences and attains a different perspective on the situation being observed.

These new insights connect one to another to generate a clearer picture of the sense made of the phenomenon. Werner and Rothe (1979) label this internal hermeneutics, that is interpretation from within the situation. The descriptions emerge from the situation itself rather than from a system or model placed upon the situation. The latter is then called external hermeneutics. It is with internal hermeneutics that I undertake this research.

True to the critical orientation of my research approach, I will endeavor to respect the key ingredient of the critical sciences - "a critical self-reflection that uncovers the personal and social genesis of one's attitude and unmasks the interest of one's present action, within the context of societal action" (Groome, 1980, p. 172).

Metaphorically, the hermeneutic circle is a dance of the interpreter and the situation in which she finds herself.

DOING THE RESEARCH

Having determined my research question, I chose a naturalistic methodology which is qualitative, holistic and observational. "A fundamental goal of the naturalistic method is to develop theories which explain the feelings, emotions, definitions, attitudes and actual behaviors of those observed" (Denzin, 1978, p. 2).

The process I adopted to assist me in the discovery of meaning in the lived experience of my students is the following:

a) gather the life experiences - I used a combination of interviewing, observing, dialoguing, writing and reflecting.

b) reflect on the data in a 'disciplined' way, to identify themes.

c) reflect on implications for practical action.

I selected data from the following settings:

1. three university education courses in the area of literary discourse

    a) a C.I. course in which I participated as a student - Literature and Learning

    b) a C.I. course taught by a colleague - Creative Aspects of Language in the Elementary School

    c) a C.I. course taught by myself - L'enseignement de la littérature à l'élémentaire.

2. a seminar held for second language educators in which I was a participant.

Experiencing a different way of exploring literary discourse led me to focus on experiential learning, always emphasizing critical, reflective reading and writing in the curriculum and instruction course I teach called CuMe 410 - L'enseignement de la littérature à l'élémentaire. The group is comprised of twenty students: eighteen females and two males. Fifteen of them are undergraduate B. Ed students while five of them are practising teachers interested in children's literature. The class meets for a complete semester (13 weeks), once a week, for three hours.

I also draw data from events experienced by students in another university setting. I interviewed the students of my colleague, Dr. Nolin [1] at the end of a course called Creative Aspects of Language in the Elementary School. Although the learning events were not identical, the beliefs held by their professor were fundamentally the same as mine.

In my attempt to understand the movements of teaching and enhance the possibilities of emancipation, I draw from my own experience as well as from dialogues and interviews with individuals involved in emancipatory or liberatory teaching. [1] It is through internal hermeneutics that I search for the threads of knowledge that will eventually emerge to present a clearer picture of the meaning I make of this shared human experience.

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[1] In order to protect the identity of the participants of this study, pseudonyms were used throughout the dissertation.

Although participant observation and informal interviewing are used to collect data in this research method, I chose journal writing as the most important authentic data source for my research.

I also kept a journal to reflect regularly on events as they happened in the classroom. It is in this light that I raised tentative questions and used my imagination to reflect on potential meanings. This is the moment Burton (1986) calls 'disciplined reflection'. Disciplined reflection led me to uncover the themes which I re- constructed in the dance of my dissertation. Through this reflection, a clearer and more penetrating awareness of the issues emerged.

Like Craig (1984), I found that a second-reader - not involved with the research - provided invaluable feedback and suggestions. It is, however, by combining and synthesizing the multiple kinds of data that the dance began to take shape.

The Role of the Researcher

My intent in this research is to do research *with* people rather than *on* people. Walker (1980) uses an analogy which helps clarify my position as a researcher. He cites the occasion of a film made about a starving family and points out that the family was still starving when the filmmaker left. I have decided to be part of the community I study and to share the responsibility for making a difference in the situation. Hopefully, students participating in the study will not only have been conscientized to topics for reflection - 'food for thought' but also will have been exposed to 'skills for thought'. In that way, they will be able to continue their investigations when I leave. We will dance together and the dance will continue upon parting.

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[1] Within this dissertation, you will find some quotations in French and in English. The data is drawn from journal entries and interviews in these two respective languages. It was deemed important to use the quotations verbatim to preserve the authenticity of the data.

The researcher in action research plays a vital role because he/she is the filter through which the hidden meanings emerge. Care must be taken to understand naturally occurring events and relationships or interactions in their naturally occurring states. In this research I attempt to be "a person who can help the participants better understand what is occuring by sharing explicit processes and actual data for negotiated interpretation" (Comber, 1988, p. 783). The students will not only be invited to dance but they will be incited to create their own choreography.

CHAPTER 4

FORM-GIVING: CREATING MY CHOREOGRAPHY

> "One must create the right atmosphere for the improviser - a sense of freedom, time and space for creating."
>
> (Hinkley, 1980, p. 11)

Reflections on the experiences presented in Chapter 2 have heightened my own level of consciousness as to the importance of the moments of contemplation and engagement in the act of teaching. As I share with you the shape I have given to my choreography during this moment of form-giving in my dance, I realize the steps I attempt to integrate in the choreography for my students are a mirror image of the ones I have taken in creating my dissertation. Within the moment of form-giving of my dissertation will be choreographed another dance - that of my CuMe 410 dance. The moments identified in the dance of my dissertation - contemplation, engagement, form-giving, emergence and release - will be recurring within the dance of my pedagogy.

As I name for myself the realities which I slowly identify as valid in my pedagogy, I see my role as an occasion for educational experiences rather than as as a 'depositor of knowledge in a receptacle' in the Freirian sense. I share Buscaglia's (1982) powerful metaphor of the teacher as an artist who prepares a feast and invites the guests to savor the joys of the events with him. He states:

> "Tout professeur en puissance est un facilitateur, une personne qui met les choses sur la table, montre aux gens combien c'est excitant et merveilleux et leur dit de se servir" (p. 17).

Although my choreography is unfinished, I already sense its beauty and majesty and recognize the power of the privilege of creating my own dance. I am beginning to understand what it means to breathe life into a subject matter or into a pre-established methodology. In French, we say the teacher is an 'animateur'. The root of that word is helpful to illustrate my idea. *Anima* in Greek means a breath of life.

This is indeed what I attempt to do as I design a course called CuMe 410 - L'enseignement de la littérature à l'élémentaire. In my quest to provide greater vitality to the educational process, I focus on literature as a means to enhance the fulfillment of each individual to his/her maximum capacity. Literature as a discipline offers a means to raise the level of consciousness, relative to our 'becoming' as human beings - as we are unfinished, incomplete beings living in an unfinished reality. In all creative works, the masterpiece is incomplete unless it is interpreted. So it is with literature. Literature by its nature is also an incomplete, unfinished artifact until it is encountered. The text presupposes that a reader will establish a dialogue and supply the other half of the conversation. The reader is a performer much like a dancer who performs a choreography. Once the dance is performed, we are left with black and white floor-pattern notation. Like the dancer, the reader breathes life in the text. The reader must interpret the black and white symbols to make it into a work of art. The text is an occasion to dance.

Only then does literature become instrumental in emancipatory education. At that moment, it becomes a valuable opportunity to heighten our level of consciousness and urges us towards order and harmony, the most basic need of man. Because literature is about life, about conflicts and issues all human beings have to reflect upon, it is an ideal subject matter to integrate within an emancipatory paradigm. It is through action and reflection that the reader is empowered and conscientized to its reality. Furthermore, literary discourse, present in much of our lives, offers different ways of knowing. To the most common way of knowing - that is, knowing cognitively, we infuse knowing emotionally, imaginatively, intuitively and spiritually.

Literature has many functions; it can humanize, it can transmit a culture, a language, social values. It can contest, liberate, empower and give advice. Literature can also heighten our sense of beauty and educate our imagination. However, as soon as we privilege one function over the others, we prevent literature from doing what it is supposed to do, that is, fulfill a large number of functions, left to the discretion of the reader. It is this freedom which makes reading literature a creative act. In a real sense literature is not a discipline to be learned (message) but a discipline in which one learns (medium). This dimension is central to my teaching as it adds openness and grace to the movements of my dance.

Many techniques and strategies can be used to put the moment of form-giving into effect. Creativity and imagination must be called upon to engage in the tasks as they are identified as viable at a particular moment during the course.

The main point is that the steps within this moment should flow harmoniously rather than follow a lock -step sequencing. As one teacher commented: "Shared praxis is really an attitude and style of teaching, which the teacher must develop and grow into from using it. Then the movements flow from that in a variety of combinations" (Groome, 1980, p. 224).

I share now the moments I have experienced as a teacher of CuMe 410. This chapter will describe the process I went through to decide on the content and to organize the context in which the chosen content is experienced.

A Moment of Stillness

Prior to creating my dance, like an artist, I engage in a period of silence, of stillness, to contemplate on my dance and on the people who will help me bring it forth.. In preparation for the learners who come to me with the intention of learning, putting themselves in my trust to educate them, I feel that I owe them the "Emptiness that cleans out the messy mind and charges up the batteries of spiritual energy" (Hoff, 1982, p. 146). It is this moment which makes me ready to see the possibilities of dances between human beings and a content to be learned. This encounter is the coming together of human beings in the hope of meeting as a community, each member of which is a unique individual. 'Emptiness' is the time I take to get to know the persons involved.

Engagement

From this attentive observation comes the beginning of engagement, a series of questions such as, what will I teach? To whom shall I teach what? I also reflect profoundly on a statement Hinkley (1980) makes as she shares the elements to consider when teaching dance. She claims: "the working atmosphere needs a quiet sympathetic environment; free from noise, laughter or ridicule or any destructive element which will inhibit the individual; yet with a sense of enjoyment as the young dancer begins to unfold her movements in the voyage of discovery" (p. 112). The notion of trust surfaces as I prepare our first meeting.

CuMe 410 is unlike most of the courses my students take at university. It does not provide a finished course outline on the first day, only a plan of action is proposed. The students are invited to critique it and to add or delete elements so as to match their needs and expectations. This occurence favors the moment of stillness so important to seeing and discovering the direction the course should take. It also provides the opportunity to build together in a safe climate as negotiations begin. The seeds of trust and acceptance are planted.

My students find this to be a novel idea; in most of their courses the professors seem to know what the students need to know prior to their first meeting - the didactic mode of teaching. Yet another reminder of Freire's (1970) 'banking concept' model of education, in which the teacher offers the gift of knowledge to the students who are receptacles, that is - Object! Curriculum is planned *for* the students not *with* the students. Such a small change creates a reaction by the students. Tania wrote in her journal:

> "Ce que j'aime dans l'approche de ce professeur, c'est qu'elle laisse aux étudiants des choix, par exemple, le choix même de changer le syllabus si l'on a d'autres choses à proposer. Cependant, il y également une certaine fermeté dans sa façon d'enseigner. Par exemple, pour le journal de bord, il n'y a pas de négotiation possible. Souple, mais ferme, tel est le caractère qui émane de la personnalité de ce professeur."

Gail expressed her appreciation of the teaching model of empowerment offered. When I considered their ideas in determining the course outline, she responded:

> " J'apprécie le fait que vous avez pris en considération nos suggestions et nos idées pour établir notre syllabus. Vous nous avez donné l'exemple. J'ai compris! Il est important d'impliquer les étudiants dans leur apprentissage et de respecter leur propre besoin."

Once committed to teaching CuMe 410 - L'enseignement de la littérature à l'élémentaire, to this particular group of people, I gather the disparate elements and weave them into a learning situation. Harris (1987) calls it "messing" with the subject matter. She expands on the word subject, as does Freire (1970), to include not only the content to be covered but also the human beings engaged in the process of learning. When a human being is a subject, she/he becomes an actor who initiates her or his own activity towards meaning-making. Emancipatory education is at hand.

The act of teaching is at this moment open to possibilities, to the unexpected, to the uniqueness and beauty of each learner. Francine shares her emerging sense of empowerment at the beginning of the CuMe 410 course:

> "Tu es ouverte aux idées et tu nous laisses des possibilités. J'aimerais bien que tous mes cours soient comme les tiens, c'est si enrichissant! Je me sens vraiment comme un individu à part entière comparé à d'autres cours où je me sens juste une étudiante parmi 30 autres."

It is the moment of imagination when the teacher tries to see events unfolding in the context she/he is beginning to understand. Tania described it this way:

> "Le cours est une aventure planifiée allant vers l'inconnu. Nous avons une destination en tête mais nous anticipons des imprévués, qui en effet, rendent l'aventure intéressante."

My task is to imagine what is possible with this group at any particular moment, keeping in mind how the whole class as well as the individuals in the class would respond to the literary experiences. I tried to imagine what it might be like for my Vietnamese student to read the autobiography of her compatriot when he escaped from their country by boat. I also wondered how the heterogeneous group of undergraduate students and practicing teachers would respond to the literary experiences I planned to present.

The first meeting is awkward: the students look at me, I look at them. There is uneasiness as I break the silence. The course begins with a brief activity to develop the sense of community which will become an essential part of my pedagogy. Students are asked to introduce the person next to him/her. Each is to tell what he/she already knows about his/her neighbor or, if they are unacquainted, to infer what the neighbors might be like based on the perception gained from the visual impression given. I am also part of the group: I participate actively by introducing the person to my right and, the person to my left introduces me. Already, creativity and imagination are called upon. The foundation for the partnership is set. The 'ice-breaker' provides a perturbation which is already novel, pushing them far-from-equilibrium. They are unaccustomed to speaking first in a course and my active participation in 'their' activity, surprises them.

Form-giving

The partners have begun dancing. We spontaneously create and re-create our unique personal choreographies with individual movements and combinations of movements, inspired by the music we hear and our knowledge of dance steps - both those we already know and those which we are discovering.

Harris (1987) introduces the movement of form-giving with a clay ball. As she asks her students to blindfold each other, she gives them these directives:

> "A form exists within the ball of clay you are holding in your hands and you are to find the form. But you are to find it in interchange with the clay; you are not to impose some prior vision of what is already there. So, take the time, concentrate with the clay and let it work with you, and in time you will discover that a form is taking shape. You will be able to feel, to sense it, to intuit it. Once that happens, you take off the blindfold and work from there" (p. 34).

This metaphor helps me to understand how teachers and students work together with material, contemplating it, shaping it, and opening themselves to its possibilities. We must at this time be open to the paradox of teaching. While the certainties (preparation, knowledge and understanding of literature) are essential, we must be aware of the unexpected that the learning may invoke. As a teacher gives form to a theme, she/he sets boundaries and limits. It is an ordering and a shaping according to need.

My experience with teaching has been useful in my attempt to give form to teaching. The form that emerges from my 'clayball' is literature surrounded by experience, time, choice, dialogue, possibilites and reflection.

I will now present some tools I use to structure the learning context, which eventually reveals unexpected and novel ways of seeing literature as experienced in an emancipatory paradigm.

Negotiating

The first meeting is the setting which prepares the dance. It is at this moment that the people involved, negotiate the course outline. The course outline decided upon by the students and myself appears in Appendix A. Together we agree on these guiding principles. The course will attempt to:

a) situate literary discourse in the context of communication,

b) explore different literary genres and familiarize them with children's literature,

c) enhance critical thinking and creativity,

d) explore the process of aesthetic reading

e) explore various means to experience literary discourse and

f) individualize learning so as to maximize the opportunities to empower and to conscientize students / participants to the place of literature in our educational enterprise.

With these intentions in mind, I then set the foundation of our course. (It becomes our course because I am no longer alone. I have agreed to be part of a community of interpreters.) With creative imagination new form comes into being because I risk becoming an artist to become a teacher. I proceed to 'prepare the feast' (Buscaglia, 1982) and invite the students to help themselves and to celebrate.

My students are excited about children's literature. One of their expectations of the course is to receive an exhaustive bibliography, highlighting ' good children's literature'. However, before getting involved in children's literature, I ask them to examine their knowledge of literature and their commitment to it as an adult. Do they read literature? Do they write creatively?

The context is given. If you were to be taken to an isolated island, alone, for a long period of time, which novel would you take with you? They are invited to write the title and the reason for their choice. After sharing their reflection with one person, they are invited to share it with the group. Already, the "interpretive community" (Fish, 1980) begins to take shape. According to him, interpretive community implies "a group that has certain assumptions or premises from which to make text interpretations". Trust is primordial in emancipatory teaching.

Journal Writing

In the moment of form-giving of my dance, I look for means to help students make the 'unconsious conscious'. Although my classes are choreographed around 'literary experiences', I search for ways to help students become more articulate about their learning and more powerful and people-centered as professionals.

I choose journal writing as the most appropriate tool for praxis. My first step in journal writing occurred not with my students but with a colleague, who was at the time engaged in journal writing with her undergraduate education students. She invited me to journal with her. Although I did not accept the invitation at that time, she continued to share her reflections as well as the letters she wrote to her students. It was this encounter which freed me from the fear of dialoguing with students. Not only did she offer a model for journalling but she opened the avenue of communication, allowing me to experiment and share the risks I took and the resistance I met from my students. Like Ely (1988), I experience distress when I

> "see the eyes glaze, the bodies slump, and receive that forceful message sent in so many fashions that this is all too much, this is not what I am here for, please just tell me what to do and how to do it and don't involve me with this nonsense about reflectivity" (p.677).

However, the ever-present conviction my colleague held, helped me cope with these moments of uncertainty. Her support and feedback brought me to continue the process of reflective writing with my students and for myself. Encounters with experts in the field of journalling (Progoff,1977; Craig,1984; Carswell,1988) helped me understand more profoundly the value of this means in coming- to-know. Eventually, an encounter with a professor using journals in her curriculum courses nudged me one step further. Although I believe reflective writing was successful in helping my students and me make the 'unconscious conscious', my own personal threshold of engagement was heightened as she shared with me how she uses journals in her university courses. I was enticed by her notion of reading parts of my journal entries to my students (Craig, 1984). As I expanded writing to the dimension of sharing, I realized the climate of trust and mutual support, so crucial to emancipatory education emerged. Louise wrote about it in her journal:

> "Depuis que tu partages avec nous tes réflexions, je me sens plus en confiance. Tu es un,modèle puissant pour moi. Ce cours me sensibilise non seulement à la place de la littérature dans l'éducation mais aussi au climat de classe qui encourage l'apprentissage tout en favorisant l'expression de notre individualité et de notre unicité. Je n'avais jamais avant compris comment établir ce climat de confiance. C'est fou comment un petit geste peut être si important. Nous sentons que tu nous fais confiance donc nous avons aussi le goût de risquer."

Since then, I have become more conscious about my teaching. The art of journalling continues to fascinate me as I reflect on the multiple benefits it offered me as music for my dance. I celebrate this discovery and the dance continues...

The reflections my students bring to the Literature Ed C.I. course are articulated in a journal in which we engage in dialogue. With their permission I draw from their journal entries to uncover the layers of meaning present within this course.

> "For successful education, there must always be a certain freshness in the knowledge dealt with. It must either be new in itself or it must be invested with some novelty of application to the new world of new times. Knowledge does not keep any better than fish... somehow or other, it must come to the students, as if it were just drawn out of the sea and with the freshness of its immediate importance."
>
> (Whitehead, 1929, p. 98)

In order to keep the knowledge fresh, learners are invited to write their reflections in a journal, which is shared with me, as an instrument of dialogue. It is with this medium each student finds his/her voice in an attempt to name his/her personal realities, to determine 'his/her way of learning' and to reflect on what motivates each to learn, to read, to write, to express his or her self freely during the four- month period. For example, one student, was particularly impresssed by the metaphor of the journey I announce at the beginning of the course. Véronique writes in her journal:

> "Ce voyage dans lequel nous embarquons ensemble devient de plus en plus plaisant à mesure que nous avançons vers le large."

As mentioned earlier, journalling is used as a tool to help students function at a higher level of creativity. Writing in a journal urges students to articulate what they know. It opens the participant to a process of self-discovery. Through self-discovery students become engaged in their process of learning and become conscious of ways of knowing that they previously had dismissed as invalid. As a result, they are able to argue for a pedagogy of "interpretation" rather than a pedagogy of "transmission", (Barnes, 1976, p. 151) which promotes the active participation and creativity of learners.

Journal writing is introduced on the first day of the course. Aims and procedures are presented in written form. This document can be found in Appendix B. The aims of journal writing consist of writing to:

a) share with a partner who has more experience, our development, our fears, our aspirations, our ideals.

b) convince ourselves we have ideas, we have something to contribute.

c) identify philosophies and premises underlying our beliefs.

d) reflect on the 'why' as well as on the 'what' and the 'how'.

e) reflect on events as they are being experienced.

f) take advantage of the opportunity to write in an active, authentic voice using different functions of language and a variety of means of communciation such as narration, description, argument and even poetry, on topics initiated by one's self.

At the beginning of the course students are encouraged to write about self-generated topics, closely linked to our continuing life in the course and about literary discourse as they encounter and create it within as well as outside the course. Their entries provide opportunities to engage in reflection about experiences and questions they grapple with as readers and future educators.

On the first day, they are directed to write freely. However, most students appreciate a structure to help guide them through their writing experience. A brief structure is provided to create a 'safe environment' for them. To begin the discourse they are invited to write their expectations of this course, that is, their immediate preoccupations. The students are invited to write regularly, preferably after every class. I gather the journals every week. They are encouraged to let their pens be 'their mind's eye'.

At first students explore carefully this newfound means to name their reality, to uncover the meaning they bring to text. Many students demonstrate insecurity about my expectations and about writing. Comments such as :"Est-ce bien ça que tu cherches dans un journal? Est-ce que j'écris assez?" are common in the first journal entries. They are worried about writing what I want to read and about the quantity of their writing.

Later some resistance is met as students attempt to negotiate their way out of this way of knowing: "Faut-il écrire un journal? Ce n'est pas ma façon d'apprendre. Je fais mes réflexions dans ma téte."

Two other students engaged in teaching while taking this course, felt that they did not have time to write. Fabienne confessed:

> "Je suis vraiment embêtée par cette réflexion que je dois de faire face à ce dernier cours, suivi avec vous. Comme je n'ai vraimènt pas eu le temps d'écrire mes pensées à la suite même du cours, j'ai l'impression de m'engloutir un peu. Je déteste écrire pour écrire. Et pourtant, j'adore écrire et j'adore lire. Mais cela doit être signifiant pour moi. Et voilà ça ne l'est pas tellement. Et pourtant, mon fort intérieur me dit que si je ne l'ai pas fait, c'est que je n'avais rien à écrire, à dire à ce moment-là."

In her first journal entry Joanne expressed disappointment at the amount of writing expected during a course focussing on the teaching of literature to elementary students.

> "Je ne comprends pas pourquoi on doit écrire autant parce que ce cours porte sur l'enseignement de la littérature à l'élémentaire. Je m'attendais à lire, pas à écrire."

As students became more conscious of the knowledge they had, they developed more coherent self-expression and personal voice. Doris shares with me these thoughts:

> "Je suis souvent attirée, tentée de venir écrire dans mon journal. Je crois que cette technique 'd'écriture libre' avec ton feedback (qui est une phase importante du processus) me fait prendre conscience plus fréquemment, de façon plus intéressée, envers les écrits des autres et aussi envers mes réflexions. Je me sens libre de mettre tout ce que je veux dans mon journal. Je te remercie pour ça. Avoir confiance à son auditoire permet d'écrire de façon plus honnête. J'ai hâte de voir ce que je peux faire naitre, car écrire n'est pas mon fort. Je dois vaincre des peurs qui ont été nourries chez moi, au fil des années scolaires et sociales."

She was eventually able to articulate her views and justify them:

> "Je suis persuadée que la création d'un livre par les enfants peut leur permettre de s'exprimer et de laisser aller leur créativité. Bien qu'ils peuvent faire que des

> livres simples, je crois que ce n'est pas ça l'important... mais plutôt ce qu'ils peuvent ressortir et apprendre de leur expérience. Pour moi, le but principal de cette activité serait de créer l'intérêt pour l'écriture, la créativité et la littérature."

For many students this course offers the first opportunity to engage in natural, purposeful writing - writing that calls for all the functions of language. Some students have already experienced journal writing in other University courses, but in a different manner. Josée presents the reasons she prefers my approach to journal writing:

> "J'aime mieux écrire ce journal de bord, cette année pour plusieurs raisons:
> a) tu les lis regulièrement et je reçois un feedback plus vite.
> b) tu nous encourages à réfléchir sur les nombreuses articles que tu nous as donnés. J'aime la liberté de lire les articles qui paraissent plus pertinents au moment particulier que je décide de les lire.
> c) lorsque je commence à écrire, je pense et j'ai de la difficulté à m'arrêter d'écrire. C'est pourquoi le fil est decousu et non un texte structuré. Les idées viennent et ne se ressemblent pas.
>
> C'est vraiment plaisant d'écrire un journal et d'avoir quelqu'un qui répond comme cela. C'est comme écrire une lettre et durant la nuit, il y a un farfadet ou un lutin qui vient parler avec moi."

My role in this enterprise is to dialogue with them as they submit journals every week - to encourage action and reflection. In my response to their entries, I try to help students better understand what is occurring within them by sharing explicit processes and asking questions to further their reflection. Students respond to this process positively. Laura writes:

> "J'ai lu les commentaires que tu m'as fait dans mon journal de bord. Je te remercie du temps que tu prends pour me lire. Je me sens écoutée et comprise."

I also maintain a journal throughout the course. It takes the form of reflective notes in which I write my reactions, impressions, surprises and disappointments about each class, assignments and my life. Occasionally I share some thoughts with my students and invite them to share some of their writing with us. This usually does not happen until later in the semester because trust and respect must be felt before they risk sharing their personal writing.

Once they have risked a few entries in their journal and they have become acquainted with my style of response to them, they become more open to reflect on the curriculum and eventually on the methodology. At first, the notion of critique leans heavily towards praise. Francine comments on her reaction to my way of dialoguing with them:

> "J'aime la façon que tu prends pour dialoguer avec nous - en prenant le temps de lire attentivement chacun de nos journaux et y ajouter des commentaires pertinents."

With time they venture on the 'road less travelled', that of honesty. Charles reacted honestly to the structure I felt some of the students needed. In a letter I wrote to my students collectively, I invited comments on specific notions introduced during the course. He was able to risk questioning this practice:

> "Jusqu'à maintenant j'ai beaucoup aimé écrire dans mon journal parce que pour moi c'est une façon d'apporter mes réflexions au cours, de réagir de façon personnelle et approfondie à ce qui se passe dans ce cours. Mais pourquoi devrais-je parler de l'analyse de textes selon les besoins de Maslow? Je suis d'accord avec ces principes mais ça ne provoque rien en moi. Je n'ai pas le goût ou le besoin d'en parler à ce moment. Devrais-je en parler pour la note à la fin du cours?"

Students are also invited to re-read their journals in silence or aloud in their own privacy or in the presence of a group. They re-read their entries as they write about the events of their lives. Progoff

(1977) refers to this specific technique of journal writing as "Journal Feedback" (p.36). With the passage of time, they found it revealing and significant to read accumulated entries which provided a perspective of the movement and the change slowly occuring within themselves. Josée shares in her last entry the power she felt as she reread her journal:

> "Je viens de réaliser que j'ai quelque chose à dire. Je suis fière de me relire -je ne me croyais pas capable d'écrire aussi bien. Le plus important de tout - j'ai AIME écrire. Ceci ne m'avait jamais arrivé auparavant. J'en suis ravie!"

Geneviève wrote:

> "J'ai appris qu'écrire ce que je pensais dans mon journal est une bonne façon de me libérer. Je peux accepter que les événements et les expériences de la vie (positifs et négatifs) valent la peine d'être vécus, car ce sont par eux que l'ont grandi. J'accepte et je comprends maintenant."

Towards the end of the course they are incited to prepare a synthesis of their learning and their reflections during this course. Three questions are asked to again provide a structure for those who need it. They are asked:

a) What provoked your reflections most during the course?

b) In what circumstance did you learn the most?

c) Have your opinions and beliefs about teaching and learning changed?

The last entry in the journal is often the most powerful moment of conscientisation. At this point they realize the importance of writing continuously, the reward of taking responsibility for their own learning and the power of expressive writing. It is a means in which they find delight and pride.

Students acknowledge how journal writing helps them work through problems, clarify meaning and bring their new insights to a conscious level. Fabienne, who had resisted journal writing at the beginning of the course, wrote:

> "Maintenant je comprends pourquoi tu insistais sur le journal de bord. En relisant mon journal, je suis étonnee de mon évolution et des changements dans ma philosophie d'éducation. C'est un processus si graduel. Je n'avais pas realisé que l'on peut apprendre en écrivant. Avant, j'écrivais seulement quand je savais. Maintenant, j'écris pour savoir ce que je sais. Merci!"

I consider my student's journals an authentic source of reflection for me as a teacher. Through their comments, meaning structures emerge enabling me to untangle and refine recurring themes and patterns, converging on events, interactions and relationships in the class.

A Glimpse of the Dance

To provide a glimpse of what the course is like, I quote from Doris' journal as she synthesizes her experience:

> "Depuis septembre, je fais partie d'un groupe d'échange (mais c'est vraiment un cours de littérature enfantine). Imaginez vous que ce cours universitaire n'a rien en commun (à part le mobilier) aux autres cours, dans le sens de prendre des notes, rester assis, faire semblant d'imbiber ce que le professeur a à dire. Tout au contraire! C'est un cours ou à travers le jeu, et oui... le JEU... la LIBERTE, l'EXPRESSION, le PLAISIR et la CREATIVITE, et n'oublions pas, à travers la LITTERATURE, on peut apprendre à être pour apprendre à savoir. Comme nous le dit Aristote, ce processus engloberait donc les "connaissances affectives + cognitives + émotives de l'individu qui, de cette façon peut devenir plus complet, plus sage.
>
> C'est vraiment à partir de ceci, que chaque individu qui fait partie du Cume 410, est appelé (à sa guise) sans pression, à trouver son propre cheminement, à découvrir à l'aide de différents styles d'apprentissage, ce qui le motive à apprendre: à lire, à écrire, à s'exprimer..."

The words she highlights in the choreography she designed for herself - 'play', 'freedom','expression', 'creativity' and 'literature'-encapsulate the essence of my dance.

With these movements in mind, I continue my dance as I pursue the moment of form-giving. I reflect upon the subject (the what and the who), the context most appropriate to reach the objectives (the how), and the underlying assumptions affecting the choices made (the why). In the emancipatory model of teaching, the emphasis is placed on context rather than on the product. I am concerned with the individual's performance rather than the norm of the class. I espouse experiential learning and community input to draw learners to learning as a lifelong process and to enhance the partnership between students and teacher.

Literary experiences

Because the focus of the course is on literary experiences in people's lives, the process between the reader/writer and text is of particular interest to me. As I engage students in the first literary experiences early in the course, they become aware that the meaning and the power in the literary work depends on the mind and the emotions of a particular reader at a particular time in a particular context. In fact, literary experiences both in creating and encountering literature, are viewed as "an organic process whereby meaning arises through the process of interaction" (Rosenblatt, 1938, p. 33).

As I plan literary experiences, I endeavor to:

a) reflect on preparing the context in which the discourse will be presented.

b) think about what the readers will do during the reading of the text. I want to involve them in the processes which characterize a skilled reader: anticipating and retrospecting, picturing, interacting and evaluating.

c) reflect on the need to provide sufficient space for the individual to discover, confirm and perhaps relish his own unique response to it, before the ideas of others are considered.

d) provide the means for the class to share their feelings and thoughts, to refine their ideas and perhaps, to develop them further together.

As we prepare to encounter and create literature, I draw on the framework used by Benton and Fox (1985). Theirs is the methodology that lends itself to moving in and around text without preconceived boundaries and limitations. It provides space for a blend of color, variety and changing tensions. The individual's response and collaborative work are intended to enhance the appreciation of literary discourse.

Benton and Fox (1985) in their book, Teaching Literature, present a framework for teaching literature. It is with these notions in mind that I plan a variety of literary experiences for my students.

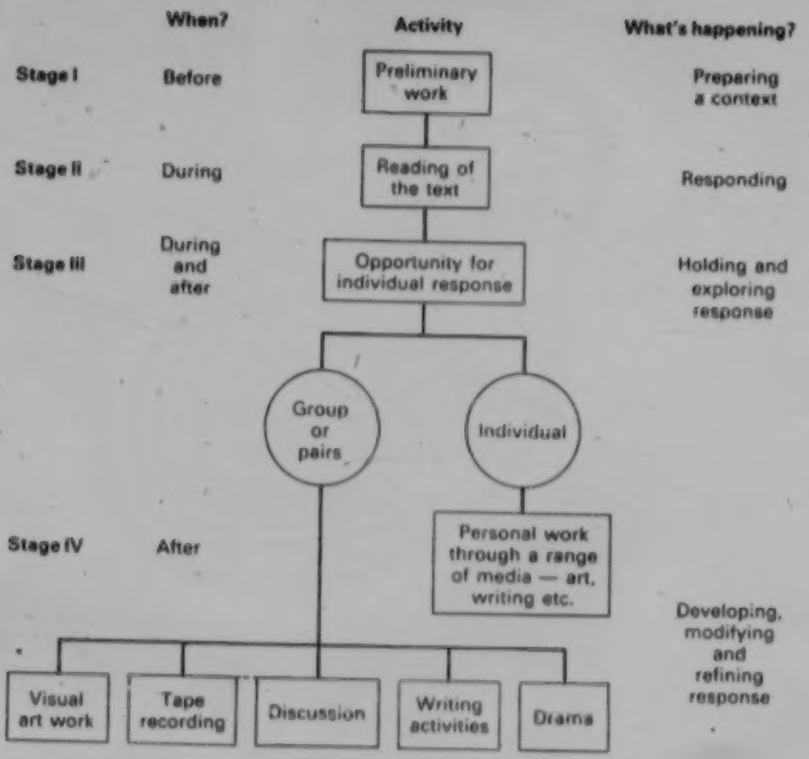
When?
Activity
What's happening?
Stage I
Before
Preliminary work
Preparing a context
Stage II
During
Reading of the text
Responding
Stage III
During and after
Opportunity for individual response
Holding and exploring response
Group or pairs
Individual
Stage IV
After
Personal work through a range of media — art, writing etc.
Developing, modifying and refining response
Visual art work
Tape recording
Discussion
Writing activities
Drama

Figure 1. A framework for teaching literature (Benton and Fox, 1985)

The context or learning situations most appropriate to this course are also proposed at this time, although I also reserve space for inspirations I may receive as the course unfolds. These are the means I propose to present literature as an end in itself and as a tool to the emancipation of our learners:

a) brief lectures by the teacher to present pedagogical approaches and literary theory,

b) individual activities of encountering and creating literature,

c) small group activities to perform literature,

d) class discussions about stories and poems,

e) journal writing.

Literary Experiences: Stories

After negotiating the course outline and introducing the role of literature in our lives, the students are immediately treated to a literary experience which plunges them immediately into the curriculum of the course, as well as into the emancipatory methodology.

The first text I read to these students is an excerpt from a short story, Le garcon au cerf-volant. Written by Monique Corriveau, the story is about Arnaud, a boy who lives in a modest cottage with his recluse father. His mother was killed in a car accident the previous summer. I choose to read a short excerpt during which the boy is beaten by a thirteen - year old bully he inadvertently trips over in his attempt to rescue a beach ball being pushed by the wind. It belongs to the only person who appears to like him on the beach, a little girl. The description of the fight conjures up strong images:

> "Il court sur le sable, nez en l'air et, soudain, bute sur un obstacle. Un garçon de treize ans, qui se chauffait au soleil, se dresse avec un cri de rage.
> - Ah, c'est toi Colin. Tu te crois tout permis.
> - Je ne l'ai pas fait par exprès, riposte Arnaud, aussi furieux. Il n'en faut pas davantage, pour déclencher une querelle.
> - Je t'apprendrai à regarder où tu marches, s'écrie l'offensé, d'autant plus féroce que des camarades accourent à la rescousse.
> - Vas-y, Marcel!
>
> Plus robuste et plus sage, Marcel a le dessus. Il martèle le visage de son adversaire; le sang se met à couler. Dégrisé, Marcel craint d'avoir frappé trop fort et s'éloigne, bien vite escorté de ses partisans.
>
> Le vaincu s'est relevé sans hâte. Avec l'eau du fleuve au goût du sel et d'iode, il baigne son visage tumefié. Il tremble de colère et d'humiliation" (p. 15).

The passage relating the father's reaction to the boy as he enters the cottage after the fight also provokes strong emotions in the audience:

> "Tu t'es battu, Arnaud?
> - Oui, papa.
> - Raconte.
> - Il n'y a rien à raconter, riposte Arnaud sèchement.
> - A ta guise. Va te nettoyer.
>
> Le père oublie aussitôt la mésaventure et la machine à écrire reprend sa danse" (p. 16).

After a moment of silence, they are invited to write spontaneously what happened in 'their mind's eye'. This brief statement honours the validity and importance of the individual's response while simultaneously generating discussion in which the similarities and the differences can be highlighted. For some students this is the first time that they have interpreted literary discourse. Anne depicts her discovery in her journal with these words:

> "Pour la première fois, j'ai une place dans l'acte de lire. Bien que mes professeurs nous impliquaient activement dans la discussion, c'était toujours pour nous demander ce que l'auteur voulait dire. Mon hypothèse n'était jamais juste."

After sharing their reaction to the text with one person from the class, they are invited to share with the group. Almost all the participants agreed to risk their interpretation of the text. However, some students did not yet feel sufficiently safe to share their spontaneous reaction to this text. Barbara wrote in her journal:

> "Je ne me sentais pas prête à partager ma réaction au texte ce soir. Je ne suis pas assez confiante. Peut-être une autre fois?"

Marianne, a student from Gaspésie, started the dialogue by telling us how the images conjured up in her mind during the reading brought her to think of her home town by the ocean and her family:

> "Je voyais bien la scène, le petit gars courir sur la plage, la bagarre, le père et le fils... Mes pensées se sont envolées vers la mer, ma mère, mon village, ceux que j'aime."

Charles risked something more personal. Having lost his father, he could identify with Arnaud:

> "Je comprends le pauvre petit Arnaud. Lorsque l'on perd un être cher, on ne pense pas à vivre pour ce qui reste à venir mais plutôt on se ferme sur le passé. Je pense qu'un enfant à lui seul, a le pouvoir de redonner la vie par l'amour. Je m'aperçois que mon esprit a beaucoup voyagé pendant que tu lisais l'histoire. Je demeurais accrochée mais je dérivais par secousse."

Doris shares how this story brought her to reflect on a variety of moments in her life. As I read the description of the setting, she also pictured some childhood experiences, when she played in open fields:

> "Je voyais les champs de chez nous lorsque tu lisais la première partie de l'extrait. Je sentais l'air frais de la mer."

When Arnaud enters the cottage after his ordeal, she accompanied him inside:

> " A l'intérieur, lorsque je suis avec Arnaud, je pouvais quasiment voir le chalet sombre, pauvre, éclairage à la lampe... je pouvais sentir la poussière!"

The strained relationship between Arnaud and his father drew tears to her eyes. As a young mother, she is presently struggling with divided affection between her husband and her son.

> "J'ai le coeur gros, les larmes aux yeux. Je pense à mon fils et à mon mari. L'amour entre deux personnes qui peut tuer/briser les liens avec une autre."

Finally, she shares a very personal moment, one that brings her back to her adolescence. The relationship between Arnaud and his father reminds her of the relationship of her brother with her parents before he committed suicide:

> "Maintenant, je pense à mon frere, mort... loin.... qui lui ne pouvait pas se confier, s'ouvrir à mon père, à ma mère. (Il s'est suicidé suite à une separation de mariage.) Le rapport entre le texte et mes expériences antérieures ont fait vibrer des cordes sensibles. Je l'aimais tant, je l'aimais tant - je ne l'oublierai pas. Le texte m'a vraiment fait réaliser, plutôt a raffermi mes pensées au sujet des relations entre personnes (que ce soit de n'importe quel âge), C'EST PAS FACILE, C'EST COMPLEXE!"
>
> Lorsque j'analyse ce que j'ai écrit suite à la lecture du texte, je vois que j'étais là avec Arnaud, comme l'oeil ou même une caméra qui voit l'action, qui sent l'action."

In retrospect, she feels that she consciously experienced two processes of aesthetic reading as identified by Benton and Fox (1985): picturing and interacting. Picturing refers to the mental imagery as a means to experience the world of story which they separate into three types: retelling, analogizing and fantasizing. On the other hand, interacting refers to the process of assimilating the text into our own experience. Although Doris does not describe anticipating and retrospecting as explicitly, there is little doubt that she also experienced these aesthetic reading processes.

Having experienced a common action together (interpreting text) we begin to name what has been experienced. The reactions to this short passage - reflection on the personal nature of responses to text - alert them to the power of literature in their lives.

The first literary experience sets the mood for future interactions with text from all kinds of literary genres throughout the course.

Further Invitations to Dance

Dance, like music, has its harmony. This harmony embraces not only soft, sweet expressions, but also all motor elements, including dissonant sounds. Most modern choreographers use every facet of human experience with the obvious intention of awakening in the spectator a heightened sense of tension in life. However, the spectator must build it with elements of the major faculties of the human body.

Like dance, teaching literature has moments of dissonance-moments when sounds mingle discordantly. As students are invited to interact with text, the personal and divergent nature of the transaction between the reader and the text is highlighted. While students expect to encounter only 'published literature', I disrupt their anticipations by exposing them to the writing created by their coursemates.

The second text encountered in this course is the autobiography of a student who had taken this course the previous year. This student, who arrived in Canada from Viet Nam in 1981, wrote about his treacherous voyage to freedom as part of a writing assignment of CuMe 410. With his permission, I share his personal writing with my students.

The autobiography describes explicitly the painful journey of an educated man seeking freedom. After eleven aborted attempts to leave Viet Nam illegally, he finally succeeds, though he leaves behind his wife and two children. The boat trip turns out to be an experience of human suffering for him, a dismal failure for the other 149 passengers: he is the only survivor. With mixed feelings of hope, guilt and despair, he tells his story matter-of-factly, resigned to the pain because it stirs in him memories he would prefer to forget.

The response to this poignant story shows the uniqueness of individuals. As they encounter the same text, the 'when' (particular time and events) in each reader's life, dictates a different interpretation, a different experience, a different spark of emotion. Josée struggling with depression states how this story helped her put her life back into perspective:

> "Il me fait réfléchir et apprécier la paix dont nous jouissons au Canada. Mes problèmes sont tout à coup si minimes à côté du défi de survivre une pareille atrocité. Comme je suis gâtée!"

A few cynics responded assuredly:

> "L'histoire est inventée. Les pirates n'existent plus en 1982. Je ne peux pas croire que ceci est vraiment arrivé. L'auteur se permet d'ajouter des détails pour embellir son récit."

Two readers who had recently been abandonned by their husbands were offended by his solo exodus from Viet Nam. They felt it was an egotistic act to save himself and to leave them to struggle with a situation he could not accept. Kathy wrote:

> "On peut percevoir sa persévérance de partir. Mais pourquoi veut-il partir seul? Il prenait un gros risque en laissant sa famille. Ne pouvait-il pas vivre avec le communisme? Si ce système est si mauvais, pourquoi laisser sa famille là? Je crois qu'il n'a pas le droit de fuir seul."

Laura immediately offered to help him bring his family to Canada:

> "Je connais quelqu'un à Ottawa qui pourrait lui aider à négocier pour sa famille au Viet Nam."

Numerous students commented on his powerful style of writing, which provoked strong emotions, pain, anger, disgust and despair. His well-chosen words brought readers to visualize the settings he was describing as he carefully made his way to the 'taxi' - the small boat used to reach 'le poisson' - the doomed vessel. Readers also mentionned how they identified with him as they anticipated the events of the voyage. Laura writes:

> "Je ne suis pas resté neutre pendant cette lecture. J'ai voyagé au Viet Nam, j'ai espéré avec lui, j'ai eu peur avec lui, j'ai désespéré avec lui. J'aimerais le rencontrer maintenant."

Two students who have experienced the ravages of war themselves, identified very strongly with the author. Véronique corroborates the story and shares her pain:

> "Je revis ces moments terribles. C'est très pénible. Si seulement je pouvais pleurer à chaudes larmes pour me soulager. Mais hélas! Mes larmes refusent de couler car j'ai tant pleurer."

Geneviève also chooses to divulge a personal reaction to his suffering:

> "J'aimerais que tu saches qu'il m'est très pénible d'écrire mes sentiments d'une expérience douloureuse et que ça m'a pris beaucoup de temps pour mener une vie ~~normale~~. A mesure que j'avance dans la lecture de l'autobiographie, je me sens emportée loin, très loin de chez moi ou peut-être dans un autre chez moi, loin de moi."

This piece of literature, as yet unpublished, offered an emotional outlet for readers, enabling a more intense and full exercise of our senses than we usually have the opportunity or the time to experience. It also provided a means of broadening one's knowledge of people and society.

The students had begun to wonder about writing. This piece of writing had been created under the same conditions in which they found themselves. They began to wonder if they could also write like that. The exposure to this text was planned to add dissonance to the musical score. Already some students picked up on the challenge of writing creatively. However, very few of them could identify with such a strong experience: hence I decided to share with them a very short piece of writing, written by another student in another course. The story dealt with a very common topic - a dog.

During the next class, I invited the students to read silently a one-page story called "Une vie de chien" (see Appendix C). The author very simply described how a little girl named Yvonne, had found a little dog and taken it home one day. Very tenderly, she proceeded to make him comfortable. She fed him and made a bed for him in her room. However, the mother did not allow the dog to stay with her. The dog was to sleep in the basement. The next day the child found the dog dead in the garbage can. Her father had killed it.

The author's writing style left the reader unsuspecting until the very last paragraph, and even then the message was very implicit. "Dehors... ton père... hier soir..." The childlike innocence is suddenly transformed and lost by the power of four or five words. The story, although not recognized as a valuable piece of literature by literary critics, provoked a variety of reactions - from the readers as well as from the author. She shared with me how writing her 'story' had liberated her. She confessed to me:

"Je n'ai plus besoin d'en parler. Je suis guérie. Je me

> sens tout à fait libéré des sentiments que j'ai si longtemps senti pour mon père."

I watched students' facial expressions as they read the last line of the story. The look of surprise, resentment and anger was sometimes accompanied by a barely audible reaction such as "Ah, non!" Two or three students pushed the copy away from themselves as they realized the father's insensitivity. Tears welled in some students' eyes. Up to this point, the reactions were silent, mysterious. What was happening to these twenty students?

After a moment of silence I asked them to write spontaneously what was in their 'mind's eye', to attempt to capture the various transactions with text within a group of twenty readers. Kimberley shares this response:

> " C'est une histoire qui reflète la réalité. Malheureusement, c'est ce qui arrive souvent entre parents et enfants. En lisant le texte, on est porté à prendre parti pour la petite fille. D'ailleurs, la réaction du père paraît inhumaine, dépourvue de tout sens pédagogique. Je réfléchis... si Yvonne, qui a perdu son chien de cette manière, arrive un bon matin dans ma classe, que ferais-je pour elle?"

This written response is shared by Tania, a recent immigrant to Canada:

> " C'est une histoire d'espoir - une espoir d'avoir de l'amitié et de la chaleur dans un pays étranger. Je me trouve dans la même situation. Yvonne est comblée, remplie de rêves... comme moi."

Francine reacted to the abuse of power adults exercise over young children:

> "Un geste posé à la légère sans y accorder une grande importance peut marquer un enfant pour la vie. Pour l'enfant, c'est un drame. Nous abusons si facilement de notre pouvoir, comme l'adulte, sans même y penser. Ce qu'elle peut penser de son père, personne ne le saura vraiment..."

Within these three reactions, we are allowed to enter the intimate world of the readers as they "grasp the soul of words rather than just walking on words" (Freire, 1987, p. 10). As we reflect on these responses, we are given a glimpse of emancipatory teaching. Students address issues of freedom and domination, as exercised by adults over children and a conscientisation of themselves as future teachers. Among other universal values reflected upon by readers were anger, repulsion, , tenderness, innocence and sympathy.

Although there was only one text, there were twenty stories. Each reader shared the reality that she/he created in relation to the text. It is interesting to note that every student accepted to risk a written response. Some allowed themselves to divulge some very personal thoughts, others remained very objective as they simply reiterated the literal meaning of the text. I celebrate the divergence of responses. However, the reaction did not remain at a written level for all students.

The tension accumulated in the text brought physical as well as emotional reactions. After reading the text, one student precipitously left the classroom in tears. She later told me that the story had triggered memories of her abusive father, memories that she had successfully repressed for nearly twenty years. The other students were visibly shaken by this outburst but no one dared verbalize their feelings. They had not yet sufficiently felt the trust within the group to discuss the discomfort of tears, pain and more importantly, the role I played in disturbing this student. However, after the class, some students told me that I had no right to ellicit such a response: "Comme professeurs, nous n'avons pas le droit de risquer de perturber les apprenants avec des histoires et des poésies." In the end, however they agreed that there are no 'safe texts' because encountering literature is an act, whereby we as readers of text, create and re-create meaning for ourselves.

As I reflect on emancipatory education, I recognize literature as an ideal discipline with which one can engage in praxis, as action and reflection are simultaneously interchanged in a dialogue about universal issues which affect everyone's lives. Literature invites readers to uncross their arms, stretch and exercise their minds as they interact with a given text. As they share their transactions with others, the dance circle is enlarged. Individuals risk making public the shape they give to their unique dance.

Again, this interaction is not automatic. Readers must be both invited to participate and very often, conscientized of their role in the act of reading. As Benton and Fox (1985) so succinctly state, "the reader does quite half the labour" (p.1). This comes as a surprise for many students reflecting on how best to explore literature in an elementary classroom.

These literary experiences bring students to a level of awareness which affects their view of literature. Our beliefs, although sometimes unconscious, are the foundation of what we do as teachers. If we have not yet discovered that the reader and the text are a transaction, we cannot bring children to 'aesthetic reading'. The course is designed first and foremost,to bring university students to engage in literary experiences so as to help them articulate for themselves what literature can do to emancipate, liberate and empower them.

Encountering poetry

Poetry is one of the literary forms we had agreed to explore in this course. Most students had expressed an apprehension, a dislike, a fear of poetry. Anne shared with me how poetry was insignificant prior to her experiences in this course:

> "La poésie avant ce cours ne me disait rien car mes expériences avec la poésie auparavant n'était que l'analyse critique. Nous lisions la poésie ligne par ligne et le professeur faisait l'interprétation pour nous. Parfois, on nous demandait nos opinions mais le professeur avait toujours le dernier mot."

Knowing their past experiences with poetry had not been positive, I felt it important to orchestrate a context which would enhance their possibilities to discover the richness and powerful nature of poetry.

Although poems work differently than stories, their focus also lies in the range of meanings yielded by the reader. Basically, the reader of a story wants to know what will happen next and how it will end. In poetry the form leads the reader to move about within the space, "discovering what it means to [her/] him and enjoying the way it makes meaning" (Benton and Fox, 1985, p. 19). Much like a piece of sculpture invites you to examine it in different light at different angles and even to look through it, the poem presents many vantage points to choose from. Each vantage point determines the sense one makes of words in a particular spatial organization. As one muses over the words -"the special words, the chosen few" (Fox and Benton, 1985, p. 19), the reader creates her/his own meaning. These authors present four attributes, uniquely blended to provide an aesthetic experience not to be found anywhere else but in poetry:

a) language - What words, phrases or lines stand out - for whatever reason- when you read or listen to the poem?

b) form - Can you say anything about the shape of the poem, how the words are laid out on the page?

c) observation - What is the writer really looking at, either outside or inside himself?

d) feeling - What feelings are conveyed during the poem at different points? Do they change? Do you share them?

In the light of these ideas, I present the challenge of encountering poetry in a novel way. The words of one of my professors flash in my mind: "If you want your students to enjoy Shakespeare, get them out of their chairs!" According to this professor, the key to a proper sharing of poetry is performance. In fact, he believes that performing literature is fundamental to learning although as teachers, we must diligently attempt to respect the nature of poems in our exploration of them. Poetry in its performance should be enjoyed and savoured for its own sake.

The 'poetry show' I experienced in my "Learning and Literature" course, became the heart of the workshop I organized for my students. I announced that we would be having a 'poetry show'. The plan was met with mixed feelings: some were excited about the idea of being spectators while others resisted with apathy - "Oh non! doit-on y participer?" I distributed a collection of twelve poems I had selected according to their variety in form, language and theme. The assignment consisted of reading each poem aloud and choosing the one each preferred.

At the next meeting time, an array of poetry books was displayed on tables as the students entered the room. The students naturally browsed through them while they waited for the class to begin. They were astonished at the quality and quantity of French poetry books available to them. As they browsed, many of them began their own bibliography of 'good poetry books'... even though it was not part of an assignment.

Finally the workshop began. With the notion of trust and confidence being of prime importance to an emancipatory way of teaching, I 'performed' poetry for my students as a preview of what was to come. I believe teachers should be able to do what we ask our students to do. I, therefore, risked performing two pieces of poetry. I performed the poem entitled Complot d'enfant written by Felix Leclerc with another student. The short poem is a dialogue of two children discussing their plans to leave home. It was presented very simply. Each reader held a cardboard in front of her face. The poem was read a sentence at a time, alternating between the two readers. As one read, she uncovered her face but immediately upon completion of one sentence, recovered it. This all happened with appropriate pauses and visual expression. It attracted attention by its novelty and its simplicity, but also by its dramatic nature. Another poem, Bonjour, composed by a 10 year - old, was read while slides made by 9 year-old students were shown. They were slowly sensitized to what becomes a powerful aesthetic experience for them.

The model I had presented to them helped to create the 'safe climate'- a necessity to embodying each literary experience I orchestrate for them. One student affirmed this in her journal:

> "J'ai beaucoup apprécié que vous avez été un modèle de tout ce que vous nous enseignez. J'avais moins peur une fois que vous aviez donné l'exemple."

I launched the challenge:

"Nous allons travailler en groupe, sur le poème de votre choix pour préparer un spectacle de poésie. Soyez brave- risquez - même si ça vous parait un peu bizarre, original. Il n'y a aucune contrainte."

The following questions provided the starting points:

a) What qualities of the poem might your students find interesting - language, form, observation or feeling?

b) How might the class meet the poem?

c) How can you help the class/individual students come closer to the text?

A handout entitled "Moyens pour vivre des expériences littéraires avec des poèmes" was distributed to present the possibilities, with warning that any activity chosen, whether it was a tape recording, overhead transparencies, movement, choral speech, visual props or 'anything else', must take the learners closer to the text.

As the task was announced, the group was propelled in a 'far-from-equilibrium' state. This can be asserted for three reasons:

a) choices were given. (They could use visuals, choral speech, drama, etc., they could work with a group or alone, they could work wherever they felt comfortable).

b) the task was novel and open. (There were no specific directions other than to draw the audience closer to text).

c) the grouping arrangement was left open. (They could work in groups, in pairs or individually.)

The students quickly set out to accomplish the task. The formation of the groups occurred naturally with the choice of poems. Meeting one another and sharing and studying the poem became the focus of our 45 - minute sprint. This activity required reading and discrimination, the exercise of personal choice and rehearsal of the presentation with the decisions about voice, pace, intonation and mood.

After a brief lull, movement and communication "suddenly soared". They were deciding which task to choose, how they would go about it, what they needed, where they would go to pursue their activity and whom they would work with. From the chaos, a new order emerged. Once the group was formed, 'perturbations' (self-perturbations and cross-perturbations) created "indeterminable startling effects". (Sawada and Caley, 1985) The re-ordered state could not be predicted, not in its nature nor when or where it would occur. The 'poetry show' was being prepared.

The frenzy continued. What would they do? The members jockeyed for position. Whose idea would be accepted? A plan of action was quickly and kindly decided as each idea was considered. A sense of trust and acceptance had now been developed.

Although none of them was an accomplished musician, singer or artist, all quickly volunteered their talents to pursue the task at hand as harmoniously as possible. Some drew free - hand (much to their surprise) pictures or masks of the characters involved in the poems. Some went to the library to find appropriate music and audio-visual equipment to bring their audience closer to their poem. Every student participated in the 'poetry show'. The delight in their own performance, as well as in the effect created by others, was obvious. After the tension accumulated during this event was released, a "tired satisfied feeling" (Barone,1983) was sensed in the room.

In the journals, students attempted to translate their catharsis by words and exclamation marks. Carole expresses her delight and surprise:

> "Nous étions content de nous. Je n'en ai pas encore revenu du talent des étudiants du cours. C'était incroyable les présentations!! Comme des petits poèmes peuvent devenir vivants! Je ne verrai plus jamais un poème sous le même angle! Et le plus extraordinaire, c'est que tout le monde a utilisé si peu de temps pour préparer sa performance!"

For Fabienne, the responsibility and the commitment of each member to form a community, was highlighted. She remarks on how the talent and the point of view of each member was important to achieve a satisfying performance.

> "J'ai beaucoup apprécié les performances de mes collègues. Tous différent et très original! Dans un travail d'équipe, je trouve cela spécial de voir que chacun a sa façon de penser, sa façon de voir les choses, sa façon de faire les choses. Et tout cela ensemble fait d'une simple activité, 'une merveille'!

I also participated in the 'poetry show'. I performed Jacques Prévert's Page d'écriture with Laura. This poem is a satire of classroom life. The repetitive pattern called for attention and the 'feeling' could not be ignored. I therefore read the poem, attending to intonation, pace and appropriate pauses. As I read the whole poem, Laura repeated the first three lines of the poem:

> Deux et deux quatre
> Quatre et quatre huit
> Huit et huit font seize.

The audience was surprised by the power of words and drama. Laura expressed her reaction with these words:

> "Notre exercice ensemble m'a prouvé que ça peut être quelque chose de bien simple qu'on fait avec de la poésie mais aussi bien puissant. Je n'avais pas réalisé la puissance de la dramatisation avant aujourd'hui. De plus, je n'avais jamais performé avec 'mon professeur'! Je comprends maintenant ce que tu veux dire par engagement et relation enseignant - apprenant.
>
> J'avais le goût de continuer. Avez-vous remarqué que la plupart de nous ne voulions pas partir apres le cours? Tout le monde était si excité que nous voulions continuer à parler de notre expérience. J'ai pour la première fois, aimé la poésie!"

The performance was indeed a celebration of meaning for all who shared in the order and harmony emerging from the chaos and panic experienced 45 minutes before. The order was in each of us but also in the collectivity of the 'interpretive community'. An almost sacred "Wow" pronounced in a respectful subdued voice reflected the aesthetic emotional feeling released to savour the moment. We had moved "from the initial acceptance of a challenge to a fulfilled denouement" (Barone, 1983).

Like dance combines music and movement to create artistic completeness, I combined poetry and experience to shock students to re-construction of experience. Many students were brought to a new awakening, a new quality of attention. They were 'forever changed'. Christiane confirms it in this statement:

> "Cette expérience m'a transformé. Je ne verrai plus jamais la poésie avec les mêmes yeux."

It is with literary experiences of this nature that I attempted to bring students to a critical view of reality, what Freire (1987) refers to as "extraordinarily reexperiencing the ordinary" (p. 104). These experiences created a tension between the prior experiences of 'banking' education and the new emancipatory teaching which proposes dialogue and self-discipline. From the tension emerged a number of themes based on lived experiences. In the next chapter, I will reflect on my choreography as I attempt to articulate my understanding of dancing.

CHAPTER 5

REFLECTING ON THE DANCE

"Dancers create dances. Creativity comes from the soul. You can't really see it at first, it just emerges".
(Hinkley, 1980, p. 21)

I borrow this statement from a twelve-year old girl involved in dancing. She captures very clearly the essence of this moment of my teaching. It is the moment of insight when something new is being born. As I reflect on my dance, patterns begin to take shape for me and I sense the emergence of knowledge - "personal knowledge" (Polanyi,1969). Slowly, recurring patterns emerge from the dancing to help me make sense of elements which enhance the emancipation of learners.

EMERGENCE

In the process of teaching, we must stay 'wide-awake' to the moments of emergence. These are the moments "when the learner takes possession of the received form" (Harris, 1987, P. 36). It consists of the often sudden, unexpected flash of insight generated by an event or an experience. These insights can take the form of newly- acquired grammar rules or of the realization of personal potential for learning and transformation. Insights can also be in the realm of the social interaction involved in learning. Debbie's point of emergence was unexpected, as she relates in her journal:

> "I was surprised when I realized that all the learning that was to be done in this class was to be personal learning. It was not a matter of learning facts to be parroted by an assignment or a test. It was a very personal learning experience. I was

> having to examine how I felt about teaching and learning, not only how Piaget and Skinner told me it was. I found myself writing and thinking things I never realized I believed before."

Scholars have identified the moment of emergence in their work in various ways. Freire (1984) refers to this moment as the "release of tension, discharge of energy and joy due to the discovery of new existential possibilities: self-affirmation, acquisition of skills such as literacy, critical reflection, taking distance to 'admire' and evaluate problems and alternative solutions, and so on." (p. 34-35)

Koestler (1964) also sheds light on the moment of emergence. It is to him we owe the expression *Eureka* as we become aware of new knowledge. He calls this discharge of energy an "emotional manifestation of the Eureka act - sudden illumination followed by catharsis".

Sawada and Caley (1985) use the term 'Becoming' to illustrate this spontaneous, dramatic and usually irreversible moment of transformation. In their view, order emerges only when learners are prompted by a new insight which creates an imbalance. The greater the imbalance, the greater the possibilities of change. These moments of imbalance which they refer to as "bifurcation points" open the possibilities of 'Becoming'.

At this moment in my dance, I reflect not only on my insights but also on those of the students involved in courses exploring 'emancipatory' teaching. Underlying 'emancipatory' teaching practices are the notions of encouraging learners to question, to analyze and to synthesize knowledge and events. Students are brought to create connections, to make sense of their own knowledge, to be more conscious of the process than the content learned, to seek meaning, to get to know one's self more fully.

In this chapter, I reflect on the nature of my teaching. The voices of students involved in this research, brought me to what Harris calls "wisdoms" (1987, p. 152). The richness of that word helps me uncover the multi- layered meanings of what one sees after dancing. The Old English root *weid* of that word is "to see" and the Greek weid - *os* is a "form" or "shape". I now turn to the 'wisdoms' that are now visible for me. The movements featured in my dance are titled: conscientisation, liberation and empowerment, and transformation.

CONSCIENTISATION

> "Conscientisation is the deepening of the attitude of awareness, characteristic of all emergence".
> (Freire, 1970, p. 100)

Reflection on Learning and Teaching

The expansion of awareness, particularly critical awareness, is obvious as I read and re-read the data. As the students participated in the learning context, they simultaneously reflected on their role in the world and on their power to transform reality. My students accepted the invitation to dance that took the form of a letter written to them at the beginning of the second month of classes. I wrote:

"En ce moment, je voudrais vous inciter à pousser plus loin vos réflexions sur les connaisances acquises de même que sur votre développement comme personne et futurs enseignants. Je vous encourage donc à réfléchir de façon critique, pas seulement sur le contenu du cours et des articles à lire mais aussi sur les gestes que je pose pour présenter le contenu.

Commentez sur la pédagogie de libération prônant que les connaissances sont nées d'invention et de ré-invention, par la découverte dans le monde avec le monde. Elle est basée sur la créativite et stimule la réflexion et l'action sur la realité. Elle répond donc à la vocation de la personne qui est authentique, seulement quand elle s'engage dans la découverte et la transformation de son monde. C'est ce que je me propose de vivre avec vous."

With time, students came to new realizations of their role, not only as literature teachers but also as teachers. Barry relates his discovery:

> "I have come to know or to recognize the incredible closeness of 'teaching' and 'learning.' I'd always thought the two to be quite separate, instead I find they are closely related."

Bob shares emphatically the empowerment he discovered in Dr. Nolin's course:

> " I have always known that I want to be a teacher. I just know that somewhere inside of me there is a teacher. My last student teaching experience really made me question my decision of becoming a teacher. Why was I working so hard? I felt negative about it. This course made me question the same issue but in a more positive way. I feel so energized and happy with myself. I know inside why I want to teach. Teaching has become SIGNIFICANT. Yes, I can make a difference in the world."

Students move from one level of consciousness to another, not only in their 'wide-awakeness' towards learning and teaching but also in their appreciation of literature.

Literature

While engaged in literary discourse, whether in encountering or creating literature, the learners were constantly involved in inventing and re-inventing meaning for themselves - from texts such as stories, poems and even music. The context was intricately choreographed so as to enhance as naturally as possible the aesthetic experience of literature. I saw my role as helping specific human beings discover the pleasures and satisfactions of literature. I endeavored to intensify the literary experiences so as to heighten the level of consciousness of the students I was engaged with during this dance.

Central to my study is Rosenblatt's focus on the nature of literature as "a transaction between reader and text". Meaning arises through the process of transaction. The transaction, although not independent of text, depends heavily on the reader's prior experiences, the particular time and particular context in which the text is encountered. Students reacted to this theory in the light of their past experiences. Betty expresses her reaction to new ideas:

> "The professor really challenged some of my pre- existing notions. Ex. that meaning doesn't necessarily lie in the text. While I accept and subscribe to this notion now, I had some difficulty with it at first."

Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading was provocative for many students. Many of them were alerted to their role as a reader for the first time. Rose expresses surprise at her role as a reader:

> "This is the first time I realize I have a role to play when I read. Never before had my teacher or my professor really listened to what I had to say and even accepted my ideas as possibilities."

Her notion of intentionality and the distinction she makes between efferent and aesthetic reading helped foster an openness to literary experiences as they unfolded during the course. In her theory of transaction, Rosenblatt (1938) presents two distinct intentions of reading: efferent and aesthetic reading. The intention of the reader determines the nature of the art. If one wishes to study the form of the text, the reader is involved in efferent reading. However, if one is involved in aesthetic reading, she/he concentrates on the experience being shaped, relative to the time and context of the encounter. The distinction she makes is the following:

> " Efferent reading tends to information, facts, what the reader carries away from the reading. The term is derived from the Latin *effere* - to carry away. The reader concentrates on the end results he seeks -the information that will be left with him when the reading is over."

In contrast, aesthetic reading designates what happens during the actual reading event.

> "The reader's attention is centered directly on what he is living through his relationship with that particular text" (p.25).

The distinction clearly lies in what the reader does and the activities he pursues in relation to the text. For example, Moby Dick can be read efferently as an expository study on whaling or aesthetically as an adventure. Another example is Pirsig's Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance. When I read it, I especially attended to the adventure of the main character, a university professor travelling with his son as I was myself teaching at university and travelling with my children. While I enjoyed the challenge and suspense of his trip as I read this book, my friend, who was at the time struggling with psychological issues in her life, focussed mainly on the philosophy embedded in the story during her literary encounter with *Pirsig*.

The response to text varies enormously and is unique for every reader. When the students discovered that as readers, they had power over the text, rather than relinquishing the text to have power over them, they expressed a sense of power and liberation that they had never before felt. Barbara shares her discovery:

> "J'étais émerveillée et bouleversée un peu au début car je pensais que le but du lecteur, c'était d'essayer de trouver ce que l'auteur voulait dire et non ce que la lecture voulait dire au lecteur. Je ne croyais pas avoir le pouvoir d'émettre mon hypothèse. Mes professeurs m'ont toujours dit ce que l'auteur voulait dire. C'est une découverte importante car elle affectera mes choix pédagogiques en littérature. Je tenterai désormais d'éviter les certitudes et de traiter les interprétations des lecteurs avec plus de respect."

The realization that they have some control over text alerted learners to the belief that education allows them to take risks, to question the relation that power has on and around them, and to realize that they have opportunities to change elements within the system and more importantly, within themselves.

> "J'ai appris que la littérature est beaucoup plus que la lecture. Le cours m'a ouvert les yeux et j'ai vu pour la première fois que la littérature a plusieurs dimensions qui sont puissantes mais la seule façon de les découvrir c'est en prenant des risques et en se libérant de nos craintes et de nos peurs. En fait, c'est en se découvrant que la littérature devient vivante car c'est nous qui apportons le sens à la littérature."

Irène also addressed the liberatory aspect of literature in her life:

> "La littérature est un moyen de libération. Elle m'a permis d'affronter des sentiments qui sont peut-être inconscients. Je comprends mieux maintenant la puissance de la littérature dans nos vies."

Importance of Experiencing Literature

As students became conscious that reading is a collaborative, creative act, they became more willing to share their personal responses. In essence, they realized that the text is incomplete before the reader engages in a dialogue. The reader supplies the other half of the conversation. As Benton and Fox (1985) expressed in their book, the reader is "invited to share in the creation of an imagined world and express his personal responses since this is where the delight begins" (p.1).

During the courses from which I drew my data, the students were often invited to respond to literature in a variety of ways. The descriptions I have shared with you in chapter 4 capture momentarily the power of the lived experiences. Heathcote (1976) uses a metaphor which fits well what I sense happens in these literary moments. If we think of text as an "unpalatable beef bouillon cube, we must find means to release this dense mass into a savory broth of human experience" (p. 186). These means can be varied. Drama, visual art,tape recording, discussion and writing activites are among those encountered in this enterprise. Through these media, these students are brought to interpret and shape their reality through their relationship with a particular text at a particular moment.

Students' personal expression about literature represents a dimension we have too often neglected when encountering literature. In many instances, literature is treated with respect, awe, and distance as if it belongs only to authors, wise people, or sages. Students are automatically excluded from this prestigious club. Prior to experiencing literary events, students perceived literature as something to know about, not as something to learn from. In creating my choreography with these students, I was inspired by Rosenblatt's sense of literary experiences. For her,

> "anything we call a literary experience gains its significance and force from the way in which the stimuli present in the literary work interact with the mind and emotions of a particular reader. Any values derived from literature must emerge from a personal, esthetic experience of the works themselves." (p. 35)

The importance of experience was acknowledged as a prime mover towards transformation. Véronique wrote this:

> "J'aimerais que tous les cours soient comme celui-ci. J'apprends d'une façon que je n'ai jamais connue auparavant. Tu nous amènes à faire des liens avec ce que nous apprenons et à se poser des questions au lieu d'accepter les réponses. J'aime venir au cours. Je me sens unique."

These comments were reiterated by Robert, who said

to me:

> "I have come to believe more in myself, I have come to know who I am, what I am about, what makes me so unique, so special."

The notion of coming closer to one's self as a result of literary experiences was common among the reactions of students involved in these learning experiences.

Not only have the experiences brought another dimension to their learning, but it allowed them to identify their fears and limitations and invited them to find solutions. Laura shares her transformation:

> "Vous m'avez encouragé d'aller chercher au fond de moi, mes réponses. J'ai pu voir mes peurs et mes contraintes. Elles ne sont pas disparues mais maintenant je sais qu'elles existent donc je peux les combattre. Je sens le pouvoir de transformer ma réalité. Avant, j'acceptais passivement ma réalité."

Doris felt that the experience gave her the opportunity to see old knowledge with new eyes. She was brought to 'extraordinarily reexperience the ordinary'.

> "Je suis contente de vivre ces expériences. Je les trouve valable parce qu'elles m'impliquent activement à créer ma réalité autour d'une oeuvre littéraire. Parfois, je reste au niveau de la découverte de moi-même et du monde qui m'entoure mais il m'arrive aussi de me questionner sur les valeurs universelles qui affectent l'humanité.
>
> Bien que quelques-unes de ces expériences ne me sont pas inconnues (contexte musical, livres presentés), je n'en suis pas ennuyée car, à chaque fois, je découvre quelque chose de nouveau."

Carole, a shy student who had been accustomed to being 'still and to look for certitudes', wrote her reflection about the new ways of learning that she discovered through experience. Having lived the experience of learning differently, she now feels better equipped to invite her students to 'dance':

> "C'est bien beau de dire qu'une pédagogie est bonne mais si on ne l'a jamais vécu, on ne la connait pas vraiment. C'est l'expérience qui nous permet d'apprendre de différentes façons. C'est la première fois que je réalise qu'il n'y a pas seulement une façon d'apprendre. Oui, avec toi, j'apprends émotivement, intuitivement et... intellectuellement. La pédagogie d'émancipation est un apprentissage de soi. Maintenant que je 'sais', je peux inviter les autres à 'savoir'."

Many students identified the literary experiences as the element which nudged them to see teaching and learning differently.

Delight

From the choreography I designed, I saw beauty emerge. I celebrate the harmony and the coherence we, as an 'interpretive community' found through collaboration and risk-taking. The joy is associated with the realization that some kind of liberation and transformation is indeed occurring and that I am participating in the reshaping of reality. Greene (1978) adds depth to the beauty and the joy I feel, with these words:

> "To find ourselves in the delight of experiencing requires a transaction with qualities and forms. This kind of transaction may be thought of in terms of acts of consciousness, meaning a series of moments in which we grasp what is given, in which we thrust into the world. To be aware of such moments is to be sensitive to the ways in which we originate them: it is to be conscious of the fact that we are the motivators of what is happening, that we are subjects responsible to and for ourselves" (p. 200).

After stumbling and falling and sometimes feeling afraid, gratification and satisfaction dominate. The release of tension accumulated between these movements creates the harmony and order from which the aesthetic quality of learning emerges. Dewey (1958) called aesthetic experience "an act of reconstruction doing" (p. 19) wherein consciousness becomes fresh and alive. It is this freshness and this vitality that lives in the heart of every aesthetic experience.

As students are permitted to actively participate and express themselves personally about literature, their sense of delight increases. Tania writes:

> "Rares sont les événements, les faits, les paysages, les objets, les personnes qui me laisseront neutre. Pourquoi? Quand on vit une expérience et on y prend plaisir, je crois qu'on cherche à la répéter."

Risk

Any curriculum which emphasizes the active and the reflective must by nature be aware of the risk of disequilibrium. The word 'risk' is often written in the students' journals. It is indicative of the impact of this notion on their learning. Educators such as Dewey, Freire, Greene and Harris mention risk as part of their emancipatory pedagogy.

Dewey (1958) stated: " All conscious perception involves a risk; it is a venture into the unknown for as it assimilates the present to the past it also brings about some reconstruction of that past" (p. 17).

The fear of risking was ever present as I intuitively orchestrated perturbing learning situations. The fear existed on my part as well as on the part of learners. I realize now that inclusive in the invitation to dance is the invitation to risk. The moment of form-giving helped me work more confidently with uncertainties, comfortable with the idea that learning may produce something quite unexpected.

Only now am I beginning to understand that within these moments of new birth, there is tentativeness, a gathering of energy. The pieces are not necessarily sealed together forever. It is a dynamic moment mixed with enlightenment, doubt, confusion and clarity. It is a movement toward completion. Each bit of newness is connected with something that has gone on before. Chains of knowledge are linked together to form a reality for each and every learner involved in our teaching. A sensitivity to the uniqueness of each individual's learning patterns lends a different character to teaching.

Students were also invited to risk. They were asked to risk in their journals, in their creative writing, in their response to literature. The creative nature of emancipatory teaching invites students to "act in spite of fear" (Freire, 1987). Freire states that "if you don't command your fear, you no longer risk. And if you don't risk, you don't create anything. Without risk, for me, there is no possibility to exist" (p. 60). Betty experienced the possibilities of risking:

" In this class, I felt we could attempt things but not in the

> sense of all or nothing. In contrast, in other courses, things were right or wrong."

Students in these settings voiced the importance of risk in their learning process but specified the importance of doing so in a safe climate.

Choice

Choice is another element which emerged as fundamental to emancipatory education. If one has no choice, one cannot exercise her/his autonomy. Therefore, every literary experience orchestrated for my students included an element of choice. I presented the choices in a variety of ways. They could choose:

a) the literary text they wished to explore.

b) the means of making sense with text.

c) whether or not they wished to share their learning with others.

d) to work alone, in pairs or in groups.

These elements, although very simple, are central to a pedagogy hoping to conscientize and empower students. These choices were touted as instrumental in the development of autonomy and responsibility. Having experienced this dimension of learning, students were made aware of its place in their teaching.

Laura wrote about it in her journal:

> "J'ai compris l'importance de donner des choix aux apprenants. Je devrai laisser la liberté à mes élèves de choisir. Ex. Je devrai respecter leur choix de partager ou non. Pour les amener à partager, je devrai choisir une variété de moyens, de sujets qui seront accessibles à tous d'une façon ou d'une autre mais qui leur permettront de se libérer devant les autres aussi."

Time

An element often neglected when we reflect on teaching is the notion of time. To shed light on this phenomenon, I quote from the book, Zorba, the Greek:

> "I remember one morning when I discovered a cocoon in the bark of a tree, just as a butterfly was making a hole in its case and preparing to come out. I waited a while, but it was too long appearing and I was impatient. I bent over it and breathed on it to warm it. I warmed it as quickly as I could and the miracle began to happen before my eyes, faster than life. The case opened, the butterfly started crawling out and I shall never forget the look of horror when I saw how its wings were folded back and crumpled; the wretched butterfly tried with its whole trembling body to unfold them. Bending over it, I tried to help it with my breath. In vain. It needed to be hatched out patiently and the unfolding of the wings should be a gradual process in the sun. Now it was too late. My breath had forced the butterfly to appear, all crumpled, before its time. It struggled desperately and a few seconds later, died in the palm of my hand.
>
> That little body is, I do believe, the greatest weight I have on my conscience. For I realize that it is a mortal sin to violate the great laws of nature. We should not hurry, we should not be impatient, but we should confidently obey the eternal rhythm" (Kazantzakis, 1952, p. 120-121).

This passage highlights for me the importance of time in teaching. We often feel the urgency of assuring that our students know everything we teach them immediately or shortly thereafter.

This "pedagogical fallacy" as named by Dewey, deprives us of the liberation of waiting - sometimes in stillness, sometimes in darkness - but never without hope. With patience, a seed planted is bound to germinate into a plant, but we resist the temptation to pull on the plant to see if there are roots. We must also accept the fact that there are no guarantees. Emergence happens silently. Indeed,

> "emergence is a reminder to all teachers that for new life to be born, the teacher will probably have to live through moments of sadness and grieving and staying in the darkness

> even to live through periods of mourning and death" (Harris, 1987, p.38).

For Freire (1970), good teachers are patiently impatient about achieving dreams and impatiently patient with students who are on their way to achieving theirs. They challenge students to know and to have their own dreams: to define choices, not just to uncritically assume them.

One student was particularly surprised by her professor's 'patient impatience' as he waited for her, (but not without nudging), while she gained enough trust and confidence to share her journal writing. She felt he understood her difficulty in writing and offered some options. This is what she told me in an interview. To the question, what was the most important growth point in the course, she answered:

> "Perhaps the most important growth point for me was handing in my journal for the first time. I didn't hand it in for the first two or three weeks. The professor did not say anything to me to make me feel I was failing. It wasn't that I didn't have any good ideas to write about because I was constantly jotting down ideas. My fear was that everything in my journal had to be deep, insightful, profound. This anxiety held me back. I was evaluating too soon. Once, he spoke to me about not handing in my journal and offered an alternative plan of meeting once a week for discussions. I declined but appreciated the fact he did not push into anything I didn't feel ready for."

In the course I teach, I endeavor to give students time to explore, to decide on how they best learn and how they choose to demonstrate their knowing.

Among the points of reflection concerning time another student wrote in her journal:

> "Je devrai respecter que chacun apprend à son propre rythme. Il faudra varier les consignes face au temps ainsi que l'organisation de la tâche. Meme si personnellement je crois aux 'sprints' que tu nous proposes, je suis consciente que je ne

> suis pas comme l'autre à mes côtes. Je suis convaincue qu'un respect pour chacun est primordial et qu'en tant que professeur, je devrez stimuler les enfants et me garder nouvelle et créative devant les situations d'apprentissage".

The 'sprints' to which this student refers consist of short time periods given during classes, to accomplish a certain task. For example, students are given 45 minutes to explore and prepare the interpretation of a piece of literature. The short time plunges them into a creative mode where students create freely without evaluating. There is no time to 'finish' the performance but the 'savoury broth' is not lost. The 'sprint' creates accumulated tension, which when released at the time of the performance, makes way for an aesthetic experience. The students leave the class with the accumulated energy within themselves and within the community of interpreters.

> " Le spectacle présenté avec la poésie est une autre expérience littéraire qui ne me laisse pas neutre. En groupe de deux et avec le peu de temps et de matériel que nous avons, nous montons un spectacle fantastique! Chaque groupe à sa manière de présenter et d'interpréter la poésie. Le plus frappant de tous cela est que nous avons tous reussi! Nous partons chargé d'énergie... et plus confiant avec nos camarades."

Other Reflections

As I reflect on the data for this research, the most striking element is that the accumulated energy is experienced differently by each individual participating in this community of learners. Although in different degrees, all of the students experienced 'Becoming'. This is not to say resistance was not encountered. However, at the end of the course, many students thanked me for my demanding gentleness which they felt constantly flowed from me. I nudged them gently into chaos, from which emerged their order. Charles expressed this notion in his journal:

"Tu nous déranges. Tu veux nous faire penser."

Paulette expressed her feelings about the commitment she sensed I have towards my students. She is sensitive to the resistance and the apathy sometimes demonstrated by students, but appreciates the rigor needed to be firm in giving learners the responsibility to risk, to ask questions, to create and to re-create. These are her words:

> "Ton engagement constant au cours m'impressionne. Je sens parfois des moments difficiles pour toi lorsque les étudiants ne veulent pas partager. Je trouve ça frustrant quelques fois. Par contre, tu ne recules pas devant les hesitations, les résistances. Toutefois, tu n'es pas indifférente au silence. Tu sembles comprendre l'importance de nous déranger. C'est la première fois que je vis cet engagement de la part d'un professeur."

The students always marvel at the talent within each one of us and at the power of collaboration.

> "Je suis étonnée du talent que nous possédons dans ce groupe. C'est phénoménal ce que nous pouvons accomplir en si peu de temps, avec si peu de matériels. Je suis impressionnée!"

And the dance continues... Meaning is invented and re-invented by individuals within this group of interpreters in ways that keep knowledge "alive". The knowledge is thrown into "fresh combinations" as the students who have experienced this aesthetic experience re-invent these with other dancers. Eventually, their dancing partners will be their students.

Use of Language

As I reflect on the participants of my study, I find they use language to make meaning for themselves, to reshape, to discover the world around them as they experience literature. The language is informal, inventive, sometimes ambiguous. Britton (1970) calls it "expressive language". He claims that it is in

> "expressive speech that we are likely to rehearse the growing points of formulation and analysis of experience. It is the means by which the old is shaped and the new is tentatively explored" (p. 35).

The use of expressive language is the key to enhance reflection on literary experiences. Doris relates the feelings evoked as she discovers its power:

> " L'écrit, c'est puissant surtout quand on choisit bien ses mots... surtout lorsque ce fut motivé par un intérêt personnel, ce qui occasionne par la suite un apprentissage plus profond, plus réel, plus permanent.
>
> Ce qui est vraiment épatant c'est que maintenant je prends le temps d'écrire parce que j'en ai le goût, le désir. Ça me donne une satisfaction aux bouts des doigts, des yeux, de la pensée... ainsi qu'un immense sens de satisfaction intérieure."

As students explore writing in their journals, they see themselves as powerful users of language, many of them for the first time. Language is perceived as the tool 'par excellence' to reflect upon and to create literature. Geneviève articulates it with these words:

> "Hier, en écrivant mes fameuses pensées, je me croyais le génie du siècle. Alors que j'ai passé ma vie à envier les grands poètes qu'on m'avait appris à l'école, je découvre en moi aujourd'hui le même don qu'ils ont. J'ai toujours cru que l'on nait prédisposé à l'écriture. Maintenant je dois le remettre en question. Peut-être sommes-nous prédisposés à plus qu'on se l'imagine? Tous ce dont on a besoin c'est

> un maximum de chances pour actualiser nos facultés et nos dons très variés."

As mentioned earlier, expressive writing is unpolished language. As I transcribe the voices of the students, it is apparent they are writing and uttering to know. Ideas flow in a sometimes faulty syntax and with spelling mistakes. Unaccustomed to presenting writing which is unfinished, Gail apologizes for her writing:

> "Au début, j'ai simplement gribouiller ce qui me passait par la tête en lisant le texte autobiographique. C'est malpropre et les idées sont détachées mais j'ai decidé de ne pas l'écrire de nouveau parce que j'aurais probablement changé le texte. Je réalise que j'ai réussi à présenter ma pensée plus clairement de cette façon, Une autre découverte!"

Laura, who had not spoken French in 20 years was freed from her fear of writing when I assured them I was not reading for form but for ideas. The journal was announced as an instrument of reflection. However, I did tell them I would be glad to assist them in sharpening their writing skills if they so wished. She risked from the very beginning of the course:

> "J'ai peur mais mon bonheur et mon excitation pour le cours sont heureusement plus fort que ma peur. Wow! C'est excitant! Le professeur nous encourage à penser à ce qu'on fait et à se questionner. Elle essaye de nous ébranler pour nous encourager à penser et à ne pas prendre nos idées pour acquis."

She did accept my offer to correct her usage of the French language but felt she needed time to practice writing in French before I started to correct her grammar:

> "Je vais vous demander d'attendre quelques semaines avant de commencer à corriger mes fautes pour me donner la chance de pratiquer et de me trouver un bon dictionnaire."

She eventually discovered the power of writing. Writing would help her become conscious of 'what she knew but did not know she knew'. These are her words:

> "Vous m'avez libéré de ma peur d'écrire en français quand vous nous avez dit de ne pas s'inquiéter de nos fautes. J'ai apprecié les corrections que vous avez pris le temps de faire ...quand j'étais prête.
>
> En relisant mon journal, je me suis aperçue que j'ai le goût d'écrire. J'ai développé le goût de m'exprimer, de faire sortir de moi ce qui bouillonne pour pouvoir avancer, passer à d'autres choses."

Creating Literature

Part of the assignments in this course is a writing folder in which students are invited to attempt personal, creative writing-poetry or prose. I suggest the prose might be a descriptive piece, a portrait of a character, a personal reminiscence, a short story, the start of a novel. The poems might be long or short, free verse or shaped by rhyme, strict meter or stanzas.

As a result, students begin shedding the dreaded censurer who paralyzed their creative writing. It is akin to the notion of spectator as discussed by Britton (1970). Whether they create a Haiku poem, a three -line free verse or a 25-page autobiography, students discover a personal creativity that for most, had remained dormant or undiscovered until this course. Véronique expresses astonishment at her writing:

> "Je m'épate parfois. Comme je te l'avais dit, je ne suis surtout pas poète, mais quelque chose de spécial m'arrive. Des idées me passent par la tête et j'écris. C'est plaisant! J'aime bien ça, je ne sais pas quoi ou qui m'inspire mais je sais qu'il y a quelque chose là."

Once students feel they can risk, written expression begins to flow. Elaine writes candidly about her new perspective:

> "I learned that in order to write 'creative stories', the content of the story can be from your life experiences. I did not know before this course that I could use my own 'self' for creative stories. It was fun to write about my camping trip to the Hutterite colony this past fall in a 'make-believe' story. I think I gained a new perspective of my experience and on how to write."

Charles, who had never before written poetry, handed me a collection of 32 poems he wrote during the four-month course. The day after the third class, he woke up during the night to write his first poem. He shares this moment with me:

> "Mardi, à 1h.30 du matin, j'ai écrit mon premier poème. J'ai jamais écrit de la poésie avant aujourd'hui. Je veux écrire des poèmes mais je ne connais pas les règles de la poésie. Pour moi, ce qui compte, c'est le message, la profondeur du message. J'aimerais les partager avec toi, non pas comme 'juge' de mes créations mais comme une personne qui est intéressé à les lire, à les découvrir - à découvrir les créations d'un débutant."

At the end of the course, he was overwhelmed by his discovery of literature and of his talent as a writer. He understood how 'real writing' is separated from 'school writing". He feels his writing was "activated by an enabling environment" (Jacobs and Roderick, 1988, p. 644).

> "Le climat de confiance qui nous entoure dans ce cours m'a permis d'aller au fond de moi, dans mon vécu et mes observations pour écrire et découvrir la poésie. J'aime mes créations. Les créations sont des plaisirs littéraires. C'est vrai! Le plaisir de les bâtir à partir de nos sentiments même si parfois c'est difficile, ça fait mal. Parfois je pleure quand je relis certains de mes poèmes. Je comprends mieux ce que tu veux dire par moments esthétiques."

He is now motivated to examine the conventions of poetry writing in the hope of one day publishing some of these poems. This possibility was awakened in him when I introduced the book Yoshiko, Enfant - Bonté, written by Nicole Hébert. The book was created during the same course, the previous year.

The students were now conscientized to important elements which made the dance smooth, looking almost effortless. They began to realize the importance of reflection - that it helps to make the unconscious conscious. Although the movements look natural, the students are now aware of the discipline and the imagination which make up the dance.

LIBERATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Liberation and empowerment are two other 'wisdoms' emerging from the dance. The students reflected on how these basic tenets of emancipatory education affected their learning.

If we accept the role of education and schooling as a humanizing and liberating agent, we must reflect, in our practices an empowering pedagogy which leads learners to the threshold of their own mind, towards self-reflectiveness and critical awareness. We must endeavor to value every human being and recognize every moment as an educational one.

Common to both words 'empowerment' and 'liberation' is the notion of freedom. Krishnamurti (1953) expounds on the function of education as the "freeing of people from fear of fear". Christine reflects this view in her journal:

> "I have a new way of looking at myself as a person. Because of the many ways I was given to explore my feelings, I think that there is very little in my life that I will be afraid to explore. I feel this has made me a more

> open, freer person, a person who can bring these same kinds of feelings to my children."

Only when learners are liberated from fear can they begin to self-actualize. The word 'self-actualization,' given to us by Maslow, is a state of emergence, of 'Becoming' - a moment of empowerment. However, attaining the state of liberation involves a moment of perception and an openness to change is essential.

Liberation

Freire (1970) identifies liberation as a praxis - the action and reflection of men upon the world in order to transform it" (p. 66). Emancipatory teaching had this effect on Barry:

> "Dr. Nolin showed me how far students can fly when they hold power. He consulted with us and gave us much freedom to do what we felt was right. And I went much further in my work as a result."

Laura came to realize the importance of freeing students from fear. She writes this in her journal:

> "Si l'individu a peur, si ses besoins de sécurité ne sont pas protégés, il ne peut pas être disponible à ce qui se passe en lui ou dans l'environnement. Pendant ce cours, tu m'as libéré de ma peur. Tu etablis pour moi un climat de confiance dans lequel j'ai osé 'risquer'."

Laura tried to extend her experience to a pedagogy which would free children from fears in schools:

> "Avec toi, je me suis libéré de craintes que je traine depuis longtemps. J'ose croire que maintenant je saurai mieux libérer les enfants qui chemineront avec moi. Cette pédagogie vise le développement de la personne."

As she experienced a new way of learning, Marianne chose to tap this knowledge in a different way. In her journal, she included a separate sheet on which she included words conjured up by the course. One day, she wrote the word 'liberation':

> "Le mot que je vais écrire aujourd'hui dans mon livre est liberté. Tu nous as appris à se donner une liberté, notre liberté, enfin ma liberté. J'ai déversé dans ce journal mes pensées, mes inquiétudes et aussi mes joies. Je voudrais que les enfants se sentent libres, de laisser courir, leur crayon, leur imagination comme tu nous as fait goûter aujourd'hui."

She reiterates her desire to share her discovery with colleagues and with her future students. The authenticity of the experience and my role as a teacher are also included in her reflection:

> "J'ai goûté, j'ai savouré une pédagogie de libération maintenant je veux en parler aux autres de ce délice... Tu as su rendre la classe comme le décrit si bien Ira Shor (1987): '...establish an atmosphere where students agree to say, write and do what is authentic to them. To help them say more, ot restrain my own voice in the early going, to give their voices room.' (p.32)"

The theme of liberation surfaced in the voices of the participants of this study. I share with you only a few reflections. However, during the dance, the crescendo sensed as students were invited to improvise in response to regular and syncopated beats evolved towards a feeling of expression of individuals and of a community of learners giving meaning to their work.

Empowerment

From liberation comes empowerment. Emancipatory education aims for a new kind of learner and new kind of society. The emancipatory paradigm focusses on empowerment at the personal and social level:

> "It celebrates the individual and society, freedom and responsibility, mystery and clarity, tradition and innovation. It is complementary, paradoxical, dynamic" (Fergusson, p. 288).

Empowerment is a concept which endorses a philosophy of personal growth and the development of critical, creative learners. Tania expresses her view of empowerment:

> "Depuis que j'ai pris ce cours, je me sens plus humaine, plus sensible. Tous les détails de la vie courante m'émerveillent. Pour cela, je trouve que la vie est moins dure et qu'il y a un sens pour continuer à vivre."

It is useful to reflect on the etymology of the word to understand the fundamental meaning of the word 'empowering'. In Latin and French, the root word "power" means "to be able; to have the ability to do or act". Power is "capability - strength or vigor or energy manifested in action". (Ashcroft, 1987, p. 142). If we add 'en' or 'em' to the verb power, it means to bring into a state of ability/capacity to act. If we are to add the suffix 'ing' at the end of the verb empower, it designates an ongoing action. The incompleteness of an ongoing action identifies a process rather than a product. Empowering then is "bringing into a state of capability to act" (p. 146).

In their journals, students often articulate the empowerment they felt during the course:

> "En me relisant au fils des mois, je peux voir que je grandis, que j'évolue, que j'avance. Ca me permet de reconnaitre ma force de vie, le pouvoir que j'ai de changer."
>
> "C'est vraiment puissant tout le pouvoir que l'on possède et que l'on peut laisser goûter aux autres en leur offrant une partie de nous ou encore en facilitant ce cheminement pour eux s'ils/elles veulent bien en prendre et en faire part. C'est tentant et difficile de résister..."
>
> Betty writes about her sense of fulfillment in learning:
>
> "I've learned how important it is to give children the feelings of power, control and the feeling of being able to do, not for a product but for the self-fulfillment that the doing brings."

Carl shares his excitement and determination to fulfill himself:

> " Tu as pincé une corde sensible à mon arc. Je crois même que j'ignorais que j'avais cette corde. Maintenant je le sais et il me reste plus qu'à apprendre à m'en servir. J'apprends à explorer un nouveau domaine - la littérature comme transaction entre lecteur et auteur. Mes premiers pas seront peut-être hesitants mais on apprend vite à marcher puis pour rattraper le temps perdu, à courir. J'en fais mon affaire!"

While some writers view empowerment as a personal resource, (Rogers, 1969; Fergusson, 1976) others limit their discussion to power over others (Galbraith, 1984; Peters, 1976; Nyberg, 1981; Freire, 1970). Happily still other theorists acknowledge both personal and social empowerment. They accompany the development of people's minds and assure harmony and well-being in the quest to nurture autonomous and responsible members of our society. Buscaglia (1978), for example, says that the highest need of man, that of being self-actualized, is "becoming the powerful forces ourselves, not puppets manipulated by outside forces" (p. 102). However, we must continually strive to find the delicate balance between our commitment to personal growth and to that of the group.

While it is important to bring learners to take risks and to be aware of the variety of forms of knowledge that exists in our world, this exercise is futile if it does not involve others. We must not lose sight of the "participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the human race" (Dewey, 1959). Freire (1987) also emphasizes this point in his book, A Pedagogy for Liberation:

> "if you are not able to use your recent freedom to help others to be free by transforming the totality of society, then you are exercising only an individualist attitude towards empowerment and freedom" (p. 109).

My challenge lies not only in bringing students to a sense of freedom and responsibility but also to build a community in which individuals felt secure in taking risks, in questioning each other. By that token, students were free to create and re-create their reality both as individuals and as a community, as expressed by Irène:

> "Dans ce cours, je me sens remplie d'énergie. Tu nous donnes du pouvoir, nous avons la chance de se libérer de nos peurs, nos craintes, de trouver des solutions ensmble et individuellement, tu apportes du nouveau..."

Stephen testified to the sense of community that developed within the group of learners involved in his course:

> "Although our professor was a powerful learning model at the beginning of the course, we eventually began learning from each other."

Denise mentionned how the 'safe climate' in which they explored literature helped create a sense of community where everyone succeeded and was tempted to risk:

> "Comme par magie, j'appartiens à un groupe d'apprenants où tout le monde réussit et où chacun se respecte. Je ne me sens pas en compétition, pour la première fois dans ma vie étudiante. J'ai découvert des talents que je ne croyais pas avoir. J'ai aussi découvert des talents chez mes collègues qui ont resté bien caché pendant les années que je les ai connus."

The sense of community was helpful for Wendy:

> "I'm not sure there were any really specific points at which I grew. I think it was more of a gradual process in which I was exploring and learning in a safe, accepting environment. Just getting to know my professor and the other students in the class was helpful, realizing they had many of the same concerns and fears as I do. I have a sense of belonging in this classroom."

Empowering as a philosophy of education must respect the delicate balance between its commitments to personal growth and to society, recognizing that "just as personal power is primary and prerequisite to synergy so personal growth is prerequisite to societal contribution. A belief in 'power to' precedes effective 'power with'" (Ashcroft, 1987, p. 154). This notion is beautifully state by Vivianne:

> "En se tenant la main ou en dansant en ronde, on se sent plus proche l'un de l'autre. Je vois qu'ensemble nous jouissons tous de la même danse. Pendant que chacun se decouvre, je vois une sorte d'amitié régner entre les participants. Nous en sortons tous gagnants!"

Dialogue

Dialogue in the learning environment is central to a pedagogy of liberation and empowerment. What is meant by dialogue? Dialogue is a process whereby learners reflect on what they know, with others and by themselves. For example, answering one's own question can qualify as dialogue as well as engaging in discussions or conversations. It is through dialogue that we encourage action and reflection.

It is important to be aware that dialogue can even be camouflaged in silence for a time. With patience and in a climate of mutual trust, profound love and faith in people's ability to create and re-create, we can truly bring learners to transcend themselves, to go beyond. Dialogue becomes the sealing agent between the teacher and the students in the joint act of knowing and re-knowing what is to be learned.

In their dialogical method, Shor and Freire (1987) describe it as

> "a moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality as they make and remake it" (p. 98)

It is in this spirit that I teach. Students identified the importance of dialogue to their learning:

> "Tout ce que l'on fait dans ce cours est entouré d'un dialogue. Ce climat favorise chez moi la libération de ma créativité."

> "J'aime la façon dont tu y prends pour dialoguer avec nous. J'apprécie le temps que tu prends pour lire attentivement chacun de nos journaux et y ajouter des commentaires pertinents."

> "Une fois qu'on peut surpasser nos contraintes nous pouvons vraiment continuer à grandir et à apprendre. Mais ce processus ne se fait pas seul. L'enseignante doit être là pour encourager, guider et partager avec l'élève. C'est vous qui m'avez aider à me découvrir par les défis que vous nous avez posés dans les classes et aussi par vos commentaires dans mon journal. Comme vous avez dit, le dialogue est la clé."

Indeed, these students named their reality and became more conscious of what they know. Bob states it succintly:

> "I found myself thinking and writing things I never realized I believed before. I was coming to know through the writing."

Education should be a means by which learners learn how to deal critically and creatively with their reality in order to discover how to participate in the privileges and the responsibilities of transforming the world into a better place to live.

> "Merci de m'avoir donné la chance de raffermir mes pensées, de mieux me découvrir et découvrir ce qui est vraiment important pour moi au lieu de me laisser emporter par la vague majoritaire."

TRANSFORMATION : ORDER AND HARMONY

> "Development, growth and understanding are not instantaneous, direct and continous but come in punctuated spurts".
>
> (Doll,1986, p. 15)

Experience does not necessarily bring students to change, to be transformed (Groome, 1980). One element which comes to mind is provocation. Students must be guided to new experiences and nudged towards new awareness. Genevieve shares her heightened consciousness of perturbing moments in learning:

> "A chaque jour, il y a un ou des moments forts. Tu sais bien me provoquer. Je ne sais jamais à quoi m'attendre."

As I reflect on what could possibly bring newness to educators and students in literature classes, I sense the flavor of learning as an accumulation of energy which when dissipated, creates the potential for order.

I refer specifically to Prigogine's theory of dissipative structure presented earlier in Chapter I. It is of interest to me as it offers a scientific model of transformation and the critical role of stress in teaching and learning. During this moment of emergence in my dance, I realized the importance of providing invitations which will create 'far-from-equilibrium' fluctuations in the learners' minds. During the process of learning, students transform the input, order and re-order it in a creative manner till they create coherence for themselves. The new knowledge connects with what they knew before and enlarges their worldview.

Just as it is impossible to predict the spontaneous reactions to text by readers, it is impossible to predict when or where a perturbation might occur or what the re-ordered state will be like. One student depicts this state succintly:

> "To ask what I learned in this class is the beginning of a novel. Learning is endless, it happens every second. With every blink of our eye, we learn something about the world and ourselves. This kind of learning is the 'real' education I have come to enjoy. I did not expect this was going to happen to me during this course."

However, the role played by the teacher in this dance is possibly the most powerful perturbation for the students. Doll (1986) claims that "the teacher must intentionally cause enough chaos to motivate the student to reorganize." The trick lies in determining how much and how to provide the incentive. "Too much chaos will lead to disruption while too little chaos will produce no reorganization. Because no preset formula can tell a teacher what this will be for individual students, teaching becomes an art" (p. 15). The art of continuously inviting students to risk was depicted in this student's words:

> "C'est très difficile d'essayer quelque chose de nouveau si personne est là pour t'introduire à cette nouvelle activité. Tu nous as provoqué à la littérature. L'expérience était imprévisible mais toujours en sécurité."

In my dance, it is what the teachers do that provokes a disequilibrium, very often resulting in a heightened consciousness towards order and harmony. Jacqueline claims:

> "Tu as su nous diriger de façon à ce que nous ayions beaucoup de liberté dans notre découverte de la créativité. Nous avons passé d'étapes en étapes avant d'atteindre non la perfection mais un seuil de bien-être - chacun le nôtre."

According to Prigogine and Stengers (1984) and Caley and Sawada (1985), Becoming only happens in far-from-equilibrium (FFE) situations. Therefore we as teachers must be catalysts of FFE situations to create perturbations which will create fluctuations, capable of re-structuring or reorganizing the 'system'. In that way, we will become catalysts in the Becoming of students. In order to succeed, however, we as teachers, must Become as we guide students through the processes of "Becoming". This statement pushed me in a FFE state. I reflected upon the challenge of practising what I preach as a teacher educator. This comment was written in my journal following a 'perturbing' class during which students were invited to risk; they were asked to respond in writing to Zamphir's "The Lonely Shepherd". Following a brief moment of silence, responses were shared. I reflected on the power of this experience - a moment of heightened consciousness, a moment of emergence:

> "L'expérience a été puissante pour les étudiants et pour moi. Pour une fois, j'ai aussi écrit suite à l'expérience. C'est si facile demander aux étudiants de créer et risquer. Mais moi? Suis-je un bon modèle? Puis-je demander à mes etudiants de faire ce que je ne peux pas faire? Ce soir a été un moment d'éveil, de conscientisation. Je me souviens du moment précis quand j'ai délibéremment décidé de participer activement au 'sprint'. Je comprends mieux maintenant l'expérience esthétique que j'ai si souvent décrit intellectuellement à mes étudiants. Je l'ai vécu... je la possède différemment."

Students commented on the discordant movements encountered in this course. One student qualified my teaching as different and attempted to identify the differences:

> "Votre style d'enseignement est totalement différent à celui de mes professeurs jusqu'à date. Comme apprenants, nous avons l'occasion d'apprendre en réfléchissant. Nous avons la liberté de penser, de partager, d'experimenter. C'est très nouveau pour moi."

As I become more conscious about my interactions with students, I have more control over my teaching and can therefore let my students have control over their learning.

The awareness is not only sharpened in the students as individuals but very often it is felt as a community of learners. Laura has sensed trust and love in the group. She expresses her reaction with these words:

> "Je me sens en confiance avec mes collègues. J'aimerais les revoir pour partager mes succès et... mes échecs quand j'enseignerai."

Perturbing Moments

The unexpected and diverse strategies used to stimulate thought and reflection were cited as positive in that they created tension, keeping learners alert, involved and motivated to attend classes.

> "Quelle pédagogie surprenante, inattendue et diversifiée. On a rit, on a pleuré et on a chanté. On s'est amusé tout en apprenant. Il y a eu des moments intenses qui nous ont fait réfléchir et prendre conscience de plusieurs facteurs, que nous avons identifiés après l'expérience."

Josée who had expected to learn passively as she did in most of the courses she took at university shared this thought:

> "Nous avons appris parce que nous étions heureux, surpris et détendus. Je vais retenir les activités changeantes, surprenantes - les activités qui mettent les sourires sur les lèvres et des pensées à développer dans la tête."

Transformation

Anything that disrupts the old order of our lives has the potential for triggering a transformation, a movement toward greater openness and stress. The students' testimonies reflect satisfying resonance and volume in their voyage of transformation. The notion of a journey in which there is a destination, however, it is not always known is portrayed by Veronique:

> "Je suis sortie de mon coquillage pour savourer ce plaisir esthétique que tu nous as donné en classe. Je partais de zéro et voici ce que j'ai appris. J'ai vécu des moments de joie et de tristesse - dependant du contexte d'une poésie et de l'histoire. J'ai aimé le choix de mots, le son des mots et le style chez certains auteurs. C'est ainsi que j'ai eu l'occasion de m'embarquer dans un voyage qui tantôt me fait revenir en arrière, tantôt me fait arrêter pour un moment pour mieux réfléchir, tantôt me fait rêver à l'avenir."

Barbara shared with me how her personal transformation gave her the needed momentum to continue learning after this course.

> " Ce cours m'a donné juste assez de momentum pour me mettre sur la piste et je suivrai le chemin d'apprentissage de la vie. Tu peux être assuré que je n'arrêterai pas d'apprendre après la fin du cours."

At this moment of emergence in the dance of my dissertation, I realize that it is also the moment of emergence for the students involved in emancipatory education as learners and teachers- to- be. As I reflect on the voices of the students involved in my dance, it is obvious that they have become more conscious of the unconscious. Such activities brought to the surface their view of mankind and of education. The transformations being manifested by these students leads me to conclude that their heightened level of consciousness will make a difference in these future teachers .

Following the emancipatory experiences discussed in this dissertation, students were invited to write three words which came to mind as they reflected on their learning experiences within the course. I include them to depict the multiple realities of students as they prepare to choreograph their own dance.

powerful (4)
caring
acceptance
discovery
awareness
fundamental
self-actualizing
imagination
esthetic

energizing
rejuvenating
emancipating
genuine, real
new, exciting
inspirational
different
liberation
ambiguity

transforming (5)
growth -inducing
understanding
thinking
ME
thought-provoking
insightful
critical thinking
birth

These words transmit the inherent flavour of the courses. From these words, flow the order and the harmony of the dance of the learners. Students found the experience as hard to describe as to deny. Students were touched by a realm of multiple realities, multiple ways of seeing. These words encapsulate the themes emerging from the dance.

Students expressed their personal transformation gave them new tools, gifts, sensibilities. Tania writes this testimony:

> "Pour tout ce que tu m'as donné et plus précisement pour ma libération. Depuis que j'ai pris ce cours, je me sens plus sensible plus humaine. Tous les détails de la vie courante m'émerveillent. Pour cela, je trouve que la vie est moins dure et qu'il y a un sens pour continuer à vivre. J'ai rétrouvé le goût du beau et du bon. Ce cours a apporté beaucoup de changements dans mon fort intérieur."

Edna shares her view about life-long learning:

> "Ce cours m'a séduit à la littérature. Je commence mon cheminement de créativité qui m'épanouira le restant de ma vie."

The transformation experienced by Carl brings him to the desire of sharing his new-found freedom with his future students:

> "Merci pour tous les cadeaux et pour ce gros cadeau - la littérature. Ces cadeaux, je les transmettrai à mes futurs élèves et... j'ai hâte de les voir deballer les leurs, avec des gros yeux émerveillés."

Although every student was transformed to a degree, they were touched differently depending on the many factors which affect the openness to change. Marianne uses the metaphor of the treasure box to articulate her view of how this course transformed this community of learners:

> "Je t'ai vu comme une amie avec un coffre plein de tout - de connaissances, de partage, d'amour et de présence. Tu as ouvert ce coffre avec nous et je pense que nous y avons puisé chacun ce qui nous convenait le plus. Nous sommes maintenant libre de faire de notre trésor ce que nous voulons."

In my quest to become a transformed teacher, I also began to enjoy new dance movements in my voyage of discovery. Never before had I realized the importance of how my view of mankind and of education served as the setting for the choreography I have been creating and re-creating for nearly two decades. This dance has given me the opportunity of becoming 'wide-awake' to underlying principles which provide the music for my dance. I am now able to articulate them more coherently. I now attempt to integrate the steps identified in my dissertation dance in my teaching. My endorsement of creative teaching provides the inspiration upon which I build. The challenge lies in remaining faithful to my ideals and to pursue them with spontaneity, flexibility, tenacity and energy.

The metaphor of dance couches a profound philosophy of education: the essence being that all matter is constantly in movement. Rhythm lies at the core of dance, as it does in life. In our lives, we are surrounded and nurtured by rhythm - rhythm of our bodies, ebb and flow of tides, the rhythm of seasons, day and night. Education being an entity which fills our lives should reflect the notion of rhythm. Whitehead (1929) tapped onto this metaphor when he described the rhythm of education having three steps: romance, precision and generalization. These steps respect the dance presented in my dissertation. As I urge teachers to take steps, I caution them to respect the movement implied in dance and also to resist the temptation of skipping steps as it may short-circuit the process. If one does not take time to contemplate on our privilege and responsibility, engage one's self and give form to our teaching, be attentive to the emergence of learning and finally be still again so that out of that release, a new moment of contemplation can begin again, the beauty and the majesty of teaching could be endangered.

CHAPTER 6

THE FINAL MOMENT: RELEASE

> "To attain knowledge, add things every day. To attain wisdom, remove things every day."
> (Lao-Tse, p. 148)

To add the final touch to the last movement of my dance, I return to The Tao of Pooh. In his closing chapter, Hoff (1982) writes:

> "The one chance we have to avoid disaster is to change our approach, and to learn to value wisdom and contentment. These are the things that are being searched for anyway, through Knowledge and Cleverness, but they do not come from Knowledge and Cleverness. We can no longer afford to look so desperately hard for something in the wrong way and in the wrong place.
>
> The masters of life know the Way, for they listen to the voice within them, the voice of wisdom and simplicity, the voice that reasons beyond Cleverness and knows beyond Knowledge" (p. 154).

In teaching, we have to learn to value this 'wisdom'. We have for too long chosen only the way of Cleverness and Knowledge. Although this remains important in the mosaic of learning, we must make room for silence, stillness. I am inspired by the testimony of a woman, quoted in Fergusson's Aquarian Conspiracy, who relates a vivid transformative experience. She depicts her "flash" of clear vision with these words:

> "We learn by releasing and letting go, not by adding on."
> (Fergusson, 1976, p. 100)

Like the dance teacher, at first the teacher models the movements and even supports the dancer with a hand as they perfect the steps.

But all good dance teachers know they must at one point let go and allow students to practice and to balance on their own legs.

There comes a moment in teaching when one feels one can do no more and the only thing to do is to let go. This is the moment of release. The energy accumulated during the process is now released as it carries its own momentum. Appolinaire, with a few words, paints a picture of the feeling I experienced at the end of the CuMe 410 course:

> "Come to the edge, he said.
> They said: We are afraid.
> Come to the edge, he said.
> They came.
> He pushed them... and they flew".

(Fergusson, 1976, p. 292)

At times, I felt ruthless as I invited students to dance. Some of them visibly would have preferred watching for the duration of the whole course. However, without imposing, I continued to invite in spite of their resistance and sometimes their refusal to participate. Maxine, a teacher with many years of teaching experience, expressed her reaction to this approach at the end of the course:

> "J'ai essayé de m'enfuir, de me cacher derrière le rideau habituel, impersonnel mais toi, tu es implacable. Cependant on a toujours beaucoup de choix. Peu importe la forme, la longueur, on doit toujours donner le pourquoi. Je te vois, souriante mais impitoyable, d'une gentillesse très exigeante. Et on comprend que peu importe la méthode, c'est le professeur qui compte!"

Her last sentence mirrors the moment of release of this learning experience:

> "Ainsi le monde ancien regarde le nouveau. Acceptez cet hommage de notre monde au vôtre. Témoignage, chère Madame, d'une vie évaluée.

The moment of release in teaching is a time of humility. The good teacher must become dispensable at one point. So it was in my colleague's course. Judy candidly told me how this phenemomenon developed over time in their course:

> "Dr. Nolin was a powerful learning model at the beginning of the course but then we started learning from each other. And now, I feel I am ready to learn by myself. I have what I need."

During the moment of release, "the release of tension and the transformation of energy takes place simultaneously with, or immediately after the occurence of insight (Harris, p. 33). Tania often expressed a sense of delight as she left the course on Monday nights. Having been educated in a traditional paradigm, she was sometimes overwhelmed by the sense of well-being learning intuitively and creatively brought her:

> "Chaque fois que je quitte ton cours, je sens qu'il y a une transformation en moi. Cette transformation pénètre doucement mais sûrement. Je n'ai jamais connu ce genre d'apprentissage auparavant. J'en suis ravie."

These aesthetic experiences lead to a humanizing reaction to comprehensible patterns of life, behavior, values and beliefs. For Doris, this moment was one of re-birth, the beginning of new life. She wrote this in the last entry of her journal:

> "Ce cours était pour moi un peu comme une renaissance. J'ai le goût maintenant d'expérimenter et de découvrir puisque j'ai une nouvelle énergie. C'est comme un souffle d'air frais."

Renée expressed it poignantly in a poem she wrote. The graduating class presented it to me publicly, as a token of their appreciation for the discovery of the wings they have (but did not know they had), during their teacher preparation program. She read it, accompanied by a musical background, during the graduation ceremony. It reads as follows:

Un oiseau

Un oiseau, c'est si beau
Quand il vole à tour d'ailes, dans le ciel
Quand il prend son élan, le matin au printemps
Et qu'il s'élance calme et confiant dans le vent.
Un oiseau, un oiseau, c'est si beau.

Un oiseau, c'est si beau
Quand il vibre sous les rayons du soleil
Qu'il partage sans cesse avec nous, toutes ces merveilles
Et de nouveau s'envole d'un movement dans le vent,
Un oiseau, un oiseau, c'est si beau.

Un oiseau, c'est si beau
Quand la tempête fait rage.
Il ne plie pas bagage
Mais à l'abri de la pluie
Gentiment, il sourit
Attendant à nouveau qu'il fasse beau.

Des oiseaux, beaucoup d'oiseaux, c'est si beau
Aux quatre coins du monde, pleins d'espoir
Ils s'apprêtent à ouvrir leurs ailes
Emportant avec eux, leur précieux bagage
Mais dans leur coeur
Toute la tristesse et la joie tourbillonnent
Pendant qu'ils s'apprêtent à partir dans le vent.

Un oiseau, c'est si beau
Un oiseau, un oiseau c'est si beau.

The image of the bird in flight resonates for me as I witness the departure of groups of learners, year after year, struggling with sadness and joy as their wings unfold and they fly.

Véronique depicts her preparation for flight as she in turn launches an invitation to me. I was particularly touched by her sense of life-long transformation during our dance:

> "Notre voyage est terminé mais je suis toujours prête à repartir vers de nouveaux horizons et j'espère que tu m'accompagnes. J'admire ta patience, ta compréhension et ta compassion. J'ai beaucoup apprécié ton ouverture envers

> nous. Tu m'as changé pour de bon et je ne puis cesser de te remercier. Je n'arrêterai jamais d'apprendre."

Although release is the last moment in the process of teaching, it is a new beginning as learners create and re-create the knowledge assimilated, to make their own. Order and harmony are the products of this aesthetic experience. As a collective consciousness, this order does not remain static. It continues to accumulate and share energy as it continues to interact with others who happen to cross the same paths. And the circle continues...

CONCLUSION

ENCORE

Having gone beyond the period of survival in my career, I now choose to teach with creative imagination. I discovered new ways of understanding teaching, to avoid boredom or dehumanizing, routinized action. I celebrate this discovery because it is not every teacher's opportunity, as Axelrod (1973) states so explicitly:

> "For most teachers, the longest, loneliest minute of life occurs in facing the first class for the very first time, when the students quiet down and look up expectantly. For some, the lonely isolation continues through an entire career "(p. ix)

The role played by the teachers involved in this study have prompted me to disequilibrium.. As I reorganize, I look more critically at the decision, the choices I make as a teacher. As I reflect on what it is literature teachers do, I am left with the picture of an artist as depicted by Shor (1987). He refers to the image of the classroom as a plastic material already shaped into one thing and capable of being reshaped into another. In this investigation, I have realized that teaching involves a "desocialzation process" because "students and teachers in a classroom are not educational virgins" (p. 115). As learners and teachers we come to the situation with our view of mankind and of education. Every teacher who takes his or her work seriously holds in her or his mind, a vision of the teaching style that she or he believes is effective.

A twelve-year old girl, Lynn, writes a poem entitled The

Sparks, which evokes an image of the dance I attempted to share with you in this dissertation.

The Sparks

O artist of the greatest degree,
Draw your finest picture for me,
Make it move, make it dance,
Let the world be entranced,
Up it goes and down it comes,
Moving sideways, shaping shadows
Tell your story let it live to its glory
Then when your tale has been told
Bid you fade away to die.

In this poem, I recognize the expectant and arresting aliveness and majesty of teaching. It conjures in me a dance comprised of strong and precise steps, choreographed using acceleration and staccato movements as well as soft, elongated leaps. The rhythmic movement phrases recurring at certain intervals suggest the simultaneity of teaching.

The title, The Sparks, is the perfect metaphor for the risk-taking nature of 'shocking' students into disequilibrium towards their own freedom. As teachers, we are called upon to give life to sparks of learning by inviting and re-inviting them to 'draw their finest picture'. Once they have done so, by 'moving up and down, moving sideways and shaping shadows', we celebrate with them and quietly go away.

The creative disruption of a passive education is an aesthetic moment for me. I take care to adjust the promptings to assure the learner is not provoked too much. The invitation I continuously extend to my students is planned with imagination as I reformulate the subject matter so that it will spark my students. Inspired by

Whitehead's rhythm of education described in his book, The Aims of Education, I review the process of teaching. His three steps: romance, precision and generalization are implicit in my dance. At first, I struggle to stand back to examine the subject matter with new eyes, although I have taught this course many times before. In this moment of stillness, I find unexplored connectedness and possibilities from which I set the limits of the experiences that will be offered to deepen rather than broaden the subject matter. Finally, as I circle back, I witness the moment when things come together - the moment of connectedness between the new knowledge and what was known before. Necessarily, this moment is unique to each student.

Such a reflection on my dance brought me to take steps for myself, as I reflected in stillness on the privilege and the responsibility of teaching. The 'spark' for me lies in the respect of the rhythm of education. Otherwise, the process could be short-circuited and in danger of premature closure.

However, questions arise for me. Can we teach teachers how to replicate these aesthetic moments and do we want to? Are we mostly called to 'conscientize' (Freire, 1970) them to the underlying beliefs from which flow such order and harmony, and leave them to compose their own musical score? I allude here to a conclusion made by Boomer (1985) after observing a literature teacher over a period of time. He attempts to explain the ineffable, which he sensed in her lessons. He states it is like

> "contrasting synchronized music played by musicians obedient to a strict conductor and music interweaving rhythm patterns played by improvisors with their own downbeats:" He refers here to

certain "African musicians who carry on five simultaneous rhythms, the melody and four percussion parts" (p. 716).

It is this spontaneous simultaneity emerging from choices made by these teachers I have a notion we should celebrate. What affects their choice? I have a sense it is as Freire (1987) said: "Experiments cannot be transplanted; they must be reinvented" (p. 185). All members of the teaching-learning group must become artists.

Although teachers often travel without a map, they should always have a sense of journeying. Their direction is directly related to their view of the world and of man and their capacity to reflect on it. As Progoff (1975) so succinctly states: "We are gradually learning that the depth resources for our lives lie within us " (p. 52).

In my quest to become the best teacher I can be, I realize that the human models I have had the privilege to encounter as a teacher and as a learner bring me to the realization that "we teach best when we are more truly ourselves" Harris, (p. 158).

The creation of my choreography unveiled for me, a new profound engagement in teaching. This dance "charmed my soul with its beauty and it spoke to me gently" (Suzuki, 1969, p. 84). As I ponder upon what I have learned, I sense a harmony in knowing. I truly feel like an artist - a dream I had not dared entertain before - engaged in a noble profession, full of beauty, majesty and joy.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SYLLABUS

CU ME 410

L'enseignement de la littérature enfantine aux petits

> "Quelques fois les lecteurs sortent du livre tout à fait transformés."
>
> Victor Hugo

Description

Eveiller l'enfant à la littérature est à la base du processus d'éducation. Afin de mieux combler ce développement fondamental de l'enfant, ce cours visera d'abord à découvrir ce que représente la littérature pour nous, éducateurs afin de mieux véhiculer cet outil d'épanouissement pour l'enfant en "devenir". Le cours sera centré sur la création et l'intéraction avec le discours littéraire.

Objectifs

- Situer l'utilisation de la littérature enfantine dans un contexte de communication.
- "Vivre" des expériences afin de promouvoir le développement du sens esthétique, critique et de la créativité des apprenants.
- Se sensibiliser au processus de la lecture esthétique.
- Explorer les multiples moyens d'exploiter la littérature enfantine.
- Prendre conscience des facteurs qui favorisent la croissance des apprenants pour le truchement de la littérature enfantine.
- Individualiser et permettre à chaque apprenant de trouver un cheminement qui lui convienne dans son apprentissage.

Contenu du cours

1. Introduction

    1.1 Buts et objectifs de l'éducation
    1.2 La pédagogie de libération (Freire)
    1.3 Principes d'apprentissage
    1.4 Principes d'acquisition de la langue

2. Approches littéraires (Britton, Rosenblatt, Paré)

   2.1 Définition de la littérature enfantine
   2.2 Les qualités d'une expérience littéraire
   2.3 Le développement du sens esthétique et critique
   2.4 Modèle de la créativité
   2.5 La littérature enfantine et les besoins de l'enfant

3. Le processus de la lecture esthétique

   3.1 La visualisation
   3.2 L'anticipation et la rétrospection
   3.3 L'intéraction
   3.4 L'évaluation

4. Une démarche pour l'exploitation de la littérature (Fox and Benton, Paré et Bourneuf, Whitehead)

5. L'exploitation et l'animation de genres littéraires variés

   5.1 La poésie
   5.2 Le conte
   5.3 Les nouvelles
   5.4 Le roman
   5.5 La bande dessinée

6. L'image dans la littérature enfantine

7. Une réflexion sur les possibilités de mettre sur pied un programme de littérature à l'élémentaire.

Evaluation du cours

L'évaluation de ce cours portera sur un dossier de travaux et de réactions consistant de 3 éléments:

1. un journal de bord - réflexion
   a) sur le contenu du cours et de la pédagogie;
   b) sur des événements qui favorise l'apprentissage pour vous;
   c) des moments forts dans votre apprentissage-moments de découverte, de surprise, de confusion, de frustration, d'émancipation;

2. vos reactions aux textes variés qui vous seront présentés et que vous lirez pendant le semestre.

3. vos créations de discours littéraires pendant le cours-prose ou poésie.

La prose peut être une description, le portrait d'un personnage, un souvenir personnel, une nouvelle, le début d'un roman, une autobiographie, etc. La poésie peut être longue ou courte, vers libres avec ou sans rimes, etc.

Valeur: 70%

Répartition des notes: à discuter.

Examen final: Valeur : 30%

APPENDIX B

CU ME 410

"La langue n'est pas la même chose que la pensée mais c'est elle qui nous permet d'y réfléchir. Ce que nous disons et écrivons est le miroir du processus de pensée et nous permet d'en prendre la responsabilité".

(Traduction de Barnes, 1976)

JOURNAL DE BORD

Buts:

- de nous mettre en situation active pour écrire
- pour partager avec quelqu'un notre cheminement professionnel: nos craintes, nos aspirations, nos idéals;
- pour se convaincre que nous avons des idées, que nous avons quelque chose à dire;
- pour se conscientiser davantage de nos responsabilités professionnelles.

Procédure: Il est souhaitable d'écrire souvent dans son journal, préférablement après chaque cours.

Avant: En laissant votre crayon suivre votre pensée, écrivez vos préoccupations actuelles.

Pendant: Notez et critiquez tout ce qui se fait pendant le cours. Ce cours en est un de curriculum et de méthodologie, donc il devrait contenir non seulement le quoi (curriculum) mais aussi le pourquoi et le comment (méthodologie).

Après: Faites une synthèse de votre apprentissage et de vos réflexions pendant ce cours. Ces questions pourront vous aider:

a) Qu'est-ce qui a provoqué le plus de réflexions pendant ce cours?

b) Dans quelle circonstances avez-vous le plus appris?

c) Avez-vous changé vos opinions, vos croyances pédagogiques, face à l'enseignement et l'apprentissage?

APPENDIX C

UNE VIE DE CHIEN

Il est entré dans la vie de l'enfant un jour de printemps alors qu'elle avait besoin d'amitié et de chaleur dans un pays étranger.

Chaque jour, depuis que Sheba a sa litière de 8 chiots, Yvonne va rendre visite à Pierre et jouer avec lui, même si Pierre est impatient avec elle. Pour Yvonne le but de sa visite est de toucher le plus possible aux petits tout chauds près de leur mère.

Quelques mois plus tard, Pierre lui dit: "il en reste un et mon père ne trouve personne a qui le donner, le veux-tu?" La joie innonde Yvonne à la pensée d'avoir le petit chien tout à elle. Le même jour, elle l'apporte à la maison et le montre à maman qui est contente pour elle mais la gronde d'avoir amené le chien avant de l'avoir demandé à son père. "Mais maman, regarde!" s'écrit Yvonne, "n'est-il pas mignon?" Le chiot se sachant admiré, se roule sur le dos, essaie de se gratter l'oreille et renifle l'air nouveau de la maison. Puis il court, ses pattes trop grosses pour son corps, la queue bien haute pour explorer.

Yvonne joue avec son toutou pendant l'après-midi et n'a même pas faim quand vient le temps de souper, tant son bonheur est intense. Durant le repas, elle se demande quel nom elle lui donnera et ce qu'elle fera demain avec lui. Bientôt sa mère lui dit de mettre le chien dans une boite pour la nuit et d'aller se coucher. Yvonne voudrait le petit chiot dans son lit, mais elle veut bien être obéissante, pour une fois, et s'endort en rêvant d'aventures nouvelles dont le chien est le héro.

Au matin, l'enfant se réveille plus tôt qu'à l'habitude, toute excitée de revoir son petit chien. Maman est dans la cuisine avec son café, mais où est le chien? "Maman, où est le chien?" La maman la regarde, les yeux pleins de larmes, et murmure: "Dehors... ton père... hier soir..." L'enfant devient blanche comme un drap et court à la porte. Elle aperçoit le petit chien, tout raide, dans la grande poubelle.

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